

Australia's Favourite Football Fanzine and Even Bigger In Athina!

goal!

W e e k l y

Vol. 6 No. 23 Monday 26th July 2010

Still
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PHOTO: GEOFF JONES

GOALS! GOALS! GOALS GALORE!

GOAL FEAST GREET'S SYDNEY FOOTBALL FESTIVAL

FOOTBALL FOCUS ON
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS'
KEVIN TOWNSON

FOOTBALL FEATURE ON
MIKE CHATZITRIFONAS

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Excitement builds for Roar Family Fun Day



Colour, fun and excitement will be the order of the day when the Brisbane Roar hosts its annual Family Fun Day at Roma Street Parklands on August 1.

Celebrating a new season, a new look squad and a new era in the club's history, the Family Fun Day will again bring fans, players and Roar officials together in a festival atmosphere.

Brisbane CEO Peter McLennan said the annual get-together - which will once again be proudly sponsored by Brisbane Airport Corporation - was one of the most vital events on the club's calendar.

"The Family Fun Day is extremely important to the club," McLennan said.

"It's a great way for our fan-base to welcome the players, the new season and to interact with each other as a supporting group.

"We as a club always look forward to the Family Fun Day and it's a major part of our efforts to launch into the successful season ahead."

Free rides, competitions, face-painting and the Roar Rapid Fire inflatable football field will all be part of this year's event.

Fans will also get a chance to meet their heroes when the squad are presented their jerseys for the 2010/11 Hyundai A-League.

Entry to the Family Fun Day is free and there will be plenty of giveaways - including special Roar showbags - so don't miss out!

The event will run from 10.30am to 2.30pm, with food, drink and the latest merchandise on sale. Brisbane players will be appearing from 12.30pm.

Brosque signs on for three more with SFC



Sydney FC striker Alex Brosque today signed a new three-year contract that will keep the speed machine at the Sky Blues until at least the end of the 2013/14 Hyundai A-League season.

Brosque, who was also named vice captain for the upcoming season, is one of the most feared strikers in the Hyundai A-League and his retention gives Sydney FC a massive boost on the eve of their title defence.

The 26-year-old Sydney junior has been an integral part of the Sky Blues since arriving for the 2006/07 season. Since, he has made over 90 A-League appearances for the club, scoring 24 goals and with his lightning speed, vision and deft touch has ripped many an opponent's defence apart.

He capped off a stellar 2009/10 season with selection in the PFA Team of the Year and was voted Sydney FC Player of the Year by his teammates for the second consecutive year.

Sky Blues get a new Hiro
Hyundai A-League 2010 Champions Sydney FC today announced the signing of midfielder Hirofumi Moriyasu to a one-year contract further bolstering the Sky Blues playing stocks.

The 24-year-old began a trail with Sydney FC one month ago and immediately impressed coach Vitezslav Lavicka and has since appeared in four preseason matches, including coming on during the Sky Blues clash with Everton on Saturday 10 July.

Bridges to lead Jets in new campaign



The Newcastle Jets have announced Michael Bridges as the club captain for the Hyundai A-League 2010/11 season. In addition to the striker's appointment as the team's new on-field leader, experienced defender Ljubo Milicevic has been named vice-captain.

Bridges, 31, joined the Jets midway through last season and immediately made a positive impact, scoring six goals as the Hunter-based club marched toward their fourth Hyundai A-League Finals Series in just five seasons of the competition. The affable Englishman will now take the captain's armband after the departure of former skipper Matt Thompson to Hyundai A-League newcomers Melbourne Heart opened the way for a new leader to be given the nod.

Heart Quartet Selected For Young Socceroos



Melbourne Heart FC's teenage quartet of Kliment Taseski, Eli Babalj, Kamal Ibrahim and Brendan Hamill have each earned selection to the Young Socceroos for the upcoming AFF U/19 Youth Championship in Vietnam.

Heart has also signed Cameron Watson and Nick Kalmar from VPL club, Oakleigh Cannons.

The Club is also playing Loddon Mallee Lightning FC as part of the Westpac Community Football Festival on Thursday 22 July at 6:30pm at Tom Flood Sports Oval, Bendigo

Moss gloves up for Gold Coast move



GOLD Coast United have acted quickly to fill the goalkeeping void left by the departure of Jess Vanstrattan and have agreed terms with Melbourne Victory shot-stopper, Glen Moss.

New Zealand international Moss will jet north as soon as possible to ink a two-year deal and begin training with his new teammates, allowing him just enough time to settle in before the start of the new campaign on 8 August.

The move is something of a homecoming for the 27-year-old 'keeper who was raised on the Gold Coast and holds an Australian passport.

United Head Coach, Miron Bleiberg, praised Melbourne Victory for their handling of the negotiations and swift attention to Gold Coast's enquiry about the player's availability.

"I must thank Melbourne Victory for their generosity in allowing Glen to speak with us and ultimately move to Gold Coast United," Bleiberg said.

"It all happened very quickly and for Glen it will be like coming home. He is signing as our number one goalkeeper and is proven at Hyundai A-League level. He is agile and reliable which is what you want in a goalkeeper.

"Glen has been in the league for some time and is very solid; we're delighted that we have been able to sign him so quickly and I'm very confident that it will be a move that suits Glen Moss and Gold Coast United.

Van's the Man for the Central Coast



The Central Coast Mariners are delighted to announce that they have agreed to terms with local junior and former Juventus and Gold Coast United goalkeeper Jess Vanstrattan to head to his hometown club until the end of the Hyundai A-League 2010/11 season.

The 27-year-old Gosford born custodian came through the ranks as a junior at Terrigal Soccer Club before signing his first professional contract with Northern Spirit, then coached by new Mariners Head Coach Graham Arnold in 1999.

After a seven year stint plying his trade in Italy's famed Serie A and a season at fellow Hyundai A-League club Gold Coast United, Vanstrattan says he is delighted to be heading back to the Coast.

"I'm looking forward to it," said Vanstrattan.

"I suppose it was a bit of a no brainer when this deal came up as a possibility. I felt from Arnie's end and my end that there was always a commitment to try to make it happen if it was possible, and it has ended up coming to fruition so I'm pretty happy with that.

"Not that I didn't enjoy myself on the Gold Coast it's a nice place, but home is home and I've got a lot of friends and family down there so I think my biggest hurdle will be getting (enough) tickets every home game!" laughed Vanstrattan.

Standing at 191 centimetres tall, the imposing gloveman recorded seven clean sheets in his 18 appearances for Gold Coast United last season as he confirmed his place as one of the country's top shot-stoppers.



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Heart signs Jon Bon Jovi

While his blonde locks and slick rock moves have made him a pop superstar, Jon Bon Jovi's latest visit to Melbourne resonates with the lyrics of his monster hit, "Living on a Prayer" as he aims to give something special to the battlers among his legion of loyal followers.

In announcing his new role as #1 International Ticket Holder for Melbourne's new A League side, Melbourne Heart FC, Bon Jovi has decided to keep the faith with those who don't enjoy his rock star good fortune and to make his association "mean something real to the fans".

Bon Jovi has purchased 4 premium memberships to the Heart and will donate the prized seats for each home game at AAMI Park to football fans who don't have the financial means to be able to afford to watch their favourite sport in the atmosphere of a live arena.

A lifelong sports fan, Bon Jovi was involved until recently in the AFL - not our AFL - but the Arena Football League in the US as one of the owners of professional arena (indoor) football team, The Philadelphia Soul. Obviously keen to score the poetic sporting quinnella, his new partnership, dare we say it, adds Heart to his Soul.

While he'll be filling seats on his sell out Australian concert tour later this year, Jon Bon Jovi decided on an original take on the favoured ticketholder role and is hoping to fill some seats at the Heart's new home with fans who share his passion for sport but who wouldn't



All Heart and Soul: Jon Bon Jovi. PIC: MHFC

normally get anywhere near the VIP seats.

As he explained: "I like to think I pour my heart into whatever I do, so supporting Melbourne Heart FC seemed pretty natural, but I wanted to see if I could share that feeling a little....especially with Heart fans that maybe have the heart, but not the opportunity to show their support."

With record sales in excess of 130 million worldwide, a second career as a movie and TV actor and as an inductee of the American Songwriter's Hall of Fame, Jon Bon Jovi's fame is highly visible.

Less well know is his long involvement with a range of philanthropic causes including his own Jon Bon Jovi Soul Foundation.

Bon Jovi's charity involvements and fundraising efforts particularly focus on building homes and access to opportunity for the poor, homeless or displaced, and his initiative to bring deserving Melbourne Heart FC fans to the game they love reflects his ongoing work.

Details on how fans can apply to use the Bon Jovi VIP tickets will be available from today (Monday) on www.melbourneheartfc.com.au.



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Goal! Weekly is available every Monday from all good newsagents across Australia.
(Tuesday in some territories)

Publisher:
Alimental Enterprises Pty Ltd
PO Box 142 Port Melbourne VIC 3207
Ph: 03 9551 7538
Fax: 03 9551 7538

Printer:
The Age Print Centre
81 - 69 Western Avenue
Tullamarine Vic 3043

Distribution:
Fairfax Media Publication Solutions
Fairfax Media Publication Solutions
Tel: 13 23 01

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Alanic VPL Grand Final prices and Gold Medal Night announced

In a further initiative to build the Alanic Victorian Premier League Grand Final into a large scale showcase event for the league, Football Federation Victoria (FFV) announced that pre-purchased tickets will be cheaper than in previous years, and will be made available for purchase online via the FFV website from Monday 26th July.

Football Federation Victoria CEO, Mark Rendell, said he hoped the price reduction would make the Grand Final accessible for everyone.

“We’re thrilled to be able to showcase Premier League football at Victoria’s world-class football venue, AAMI Park, and we’re delighted to announce these special pre-purchase prices to make it affordable for everyone to come along,” Mr Rendell said.

“We want to make this an annual event - the biggest day on the Victorian football calendar.

“It will be a fantastic day for not only the supporters of the four clubs involved, but all Victorian football fans, as they will be treated to a

great day of football entertainment at this amazing facility.”

The Premier League Grand Finals will be played on Saturday 11th September, with the women’s match kicking off at 3pm, and the men’s to follow at 7pm.

In a further announcement, FFV confirmed the date, time, venue and ticket price for FFV’s Black Tie Gold Medal Night function.

The 2010 Gold Medal Night will be held on Monday 6th September at Etihad Stadium’s Victory Room.

Gold Medal Tickets

2010 Gold Medal Night
Venue: Etihad Stadium
Date & Time: 7pm, Monday night, 6th September 2010
Adults: \$165
Table of 10: \$1500



Danny Tiatto with the Alanic VPL trophy at AAMI Stadium.
PHOTO: SYDNEY LOW

Grand Final Tickets

General Admission
Pre-purchased tickets (online via FFV website from Monday 26th July)
Adults - \$17
Concession - \$15
Kids 14 and Under - Free

Tickets at the gate on match day
Adults - \$22
Concession - \$17
Kids 14 and Under - Free

Premiership Club
Includes admission to Corporate Function area (drinks at bar prices) and Level 2 seating

*Pre-purchased tickets - \$25
Tickets at the gate - \$40

*The Premiership Club discounted offer of \$25 per ticket is available only for group bookings of 10 or more. Individual bookings and/or tickets purchased at the gate will be charged at \$40 per person.

**Special offer for FFV clubs: Any purchase by any FFV club of 10 or more tickets to the Premiership Club will entitle that club to 1 (one) ticket in the draw to win \$2500 on their FFV account for 2011.

Australia to welcome FIFA technical inspection team

Australia welcomes a delegation of FIFA inspectors next week as the bid to bring the greatest show on earth, the FIFA World Cup™, to Australia in 2022 gains momentum.

FIFA have commenced a two-month tour, inspecting the nine countries who are bidding to host the 2018 or 2022 FIFA World Cup™ tournaments.

The delegation of FIFA inspectors are responsible for conducting the technical evaluation of the bids and will visit Japan (19 - 22 July), South Korea (22 - 25 July), Australia (26 - 28 July), Netherlands and Belgium (9 - 12 August), Russia (16 - 19 August), England (23 - 26 August), Spain and Portugal (30 August - 2 September), United States (6 - 9 September) and Qatar (13 - 17 September).

The FIFA inspection team consists of six delegates and is led by Chilean Football Federation President, Harold Mayne-Nicholls.

The team will be escorted by FFA to inspect a selection of stadiums, hotels, training grounds and other infrastructure included in Australia’s Bid

to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup™.

At the end of the inspection tour, the delegation will submit an objective report to assist FIFA’s 24 executive members select a host for the 2022 FIFA World Cup™, which will be announced by FIFA on 2 December 2010 in Zurich.

“We are totally focused on bringing the FIFA World Cup™ to Australia in 2022,” said FFA Chairman, Frank Lowy.

“It is a dream, an ambition and an aspiration shared by all Australians. The inspection tour of Australia provides an opportunity to showcase our first class infrastructure and share details of our proposal for a uniquely Australian 2022 FIFA World Cup™ with FIFA directly.

“It is an important milestone in the bidding process and we need to ensure the inspectors can make the most of their short time here and see as much as possible without distractions.”

Australia’s bid also has complete bipartisan support.

Ten host cities have been selected as part of the Bid under Australia’s nationwide hosting proposal that will

see FIFA World Cup™ matches in six states and territories. Three new stadiums will be built in Perth, Canberra and Blacktown in Western Sydney and nine others upgraded should the Bid be successful, providing a \$2.8 billion infrastructure legacy for all sporting codes and generations to come.

All Australians can do their part to help bring the FIFA World Cup™ to Australia – add your name at australiabid.com.au



Host with the most: Frank Lowy

FFA cleared over ‘Necklacegate’

FIFA has cleared Football Federation Australia (FFA) of any wrongdoing around its conduct in bidding for the 2022 FIFA World Cup™.

FIFA wrote to FFA to say there were no grounds to open a case and the matter was closed.

FFA CEO Ben Buckley said he was pleased the recent reports published in The Age newspaper were shown to have no substance.

“We stated all along that those damaging allegations were false,” Buckley said.

“Subsequently we have been cleared by the Federal Government, independent auditors and now by FIFA.

“With this behind us we can now concentrate on our Bid to bring the biggest sporting event in the world to Australia in 2022.

“If we are successful it will be a thrilling result for football fans and provide a lasting legacy for all major sports and a huge benefit to the national economy.”



A set of South Sea Pearls yesterday

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PHOENIX BLOW BOCA AWAY

By John Mitchell

GOALS to Wellington Phoenix striker Dylan Macallister and captain Andrew Durante earned the home side a deserved 2-1 victory over Argentine side Boca Juniors at a wet and windy Westpac Stadium in Wellington on Friday night.

The vocal home crowd of 11,751 witnessed an at times fiery and ill-tempered clash in which no quarter was asked and none given by both teams. It resulted in the visiting side ending the game with 10 men, defender Christian Cellay collecting a brace of yellow cards.

The match completes the major pre-season hit-outs for the Phoenix, having beaten Brisbane Roar 2-1 in Hamilton and losing 2-0 away to Adelaide United.

Their next match will be the opening round of the Hyundai A-League 2010/11 competition at Westpac Stadium on Friday, August 13, against Gold Coast United.

Boca danger man Marcelo Canete tested the Phoenix defence in the 10th minute when he stepped his way through four defenders before sliding the ball beyond Phoenix goalkeeper Mark Paston's right-hand post. Soon after, Paston's hands welcomed the warmth provided by a Pablo Mouche drive.

The game picked up in intensity following a harsh challenge on Paul Ifill by Cellay that earned the Argentine a yellow card from referee Jamie Cross in the 20th minute.

Phoenix striker Macallister bagged his first goal at home for his new club four minutes later when he met a well-weighted low cross from fellow front-man Chris Greenacre on the six yard box following fine lead-up work from Ifill and Leo Bertos.

Phoenix custodian Paston was pressed into action in the closing moments of the first half, saving low and to his left a free kick from Mouche outside the penalty area.

The home side deserved their lead heading into the break, the starting line-up – Macallister aside – having a familiar look from that which closed the previous Hyundai A-League season.

Greenacre had an early opportunity in the second stanza to extend the Phoenix lead but his header to a delightful Troy Hearfield cross from in front of goal looped over the crossbar.

Referee Cross issued further cards to Boca's Lucas Viatri and Phoenix midfielder Tim Brown in separate incidents soon after as both teams showed their competitive nature in the "friendly" match. Boca's Jesus Mendez, who nailed Brown in a poor challenge, and Juan Insaurralde also found their way into the referee's notebook.

Phoenix coach Ricki Herbert resisted making any changes till near the hour mark, introducing Argentine triallist Roberto "Toto" Cornejo for Macallister and Brazilian-cum-Kiwi playmaker Daniel for Bertos.

Daniel made his mark almost immediately in the 61st minute when his looping left-footed cross from a free kick found captain Andrew Durante on the far post for a close-range header back across the Boca goal and into the net.

Greenacre made way for triallist Mirjan Pavlovic to show his wares with 20 minutes remaining. Tempers flared soon after when Cellay was sent from the field after a clumsy challenge and connection of heads with Ifill. The Phoenix mid-field dynamo was replaced soon after by English triallist Chris Shuker – who played alongside Greenacre at Tranmere Rovers.

With eight minutes remaining Durante deflected a cross by Orlando Gaona Lugo beyond Paston to revive the visitors' hopes of a result. However, the Phoenix defence held firm to ensure the match ended on a positive note for the home fans.



Players from Wellington Phoenix and Boca Juniors unite for the pre-game photo. PHOTO MARK McGEADY



All Whites and Phoenix coach Riki Herbert is awarded the Freedom of Wellington City by Mayor Kerry Prendergast. PHOTO MARK McGEADY



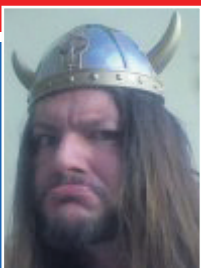
Latin and Argentinean Salsa dancers set the mood before kick-off. PHOTO MARK McGEADY



Paul Ifill jumps clear of the incoming challenge from Juan Insaurralde. PHOTO MARK McGEADY



Dylan Macallister celebrates his goal while the forlorn Boca's captain Christain Cellay rues his mistake at the back. PHOTO MARK McGEADY



TSIGAN'S TSIGAR

With Mike Lilikakis

Tsigan Rolls One Up from the Central Coast!

FOOT IN MOUTH DECEASE

Ever pressed the mute button during the news, or a documentary? I mean you can gether, ha ha, I said gether and I'm not a Kiwi...I mean gather what's going on ja, sure...but pictures, dates and faces only add 1/3 of the picture. Even in the old days of the wireless, the sounds that emitted through the pox box added the interest more-so than the picture. Well, you had to use your imagination, and that was half the point.

My gist is this. To get a greater understanding of something one must add words, sound and volume to the picture in order to fill the void. You can watch a KFC commercial, ja sure...but when you have the chicken music bok bok beck-oning, along with a voice over guy saying the words, "TENDER and JUICY or FLAVOUR", it sets off an overkill of se-ratonin which nearly renders you power-less to resist. YES, GO! GO NOW AND GET THAT CAJUN SINGER TOWER BURGER OF LOVE!

Ahem.

The Commentator:

Coulda, canna, shanna, banana be an Fugly McDugly but who cares as long as the voice is dripping goo concerning the taboo, than who should give a shmoo. Enough with the bad rap. Don't push me coz I'm close to the edge. Now then, enough gay banter. Let us look at who or what (depending on after hours responsibility) a commentator may refer to:

PUNDIT - a commentator on a topic such as politics, social sciences or sport.

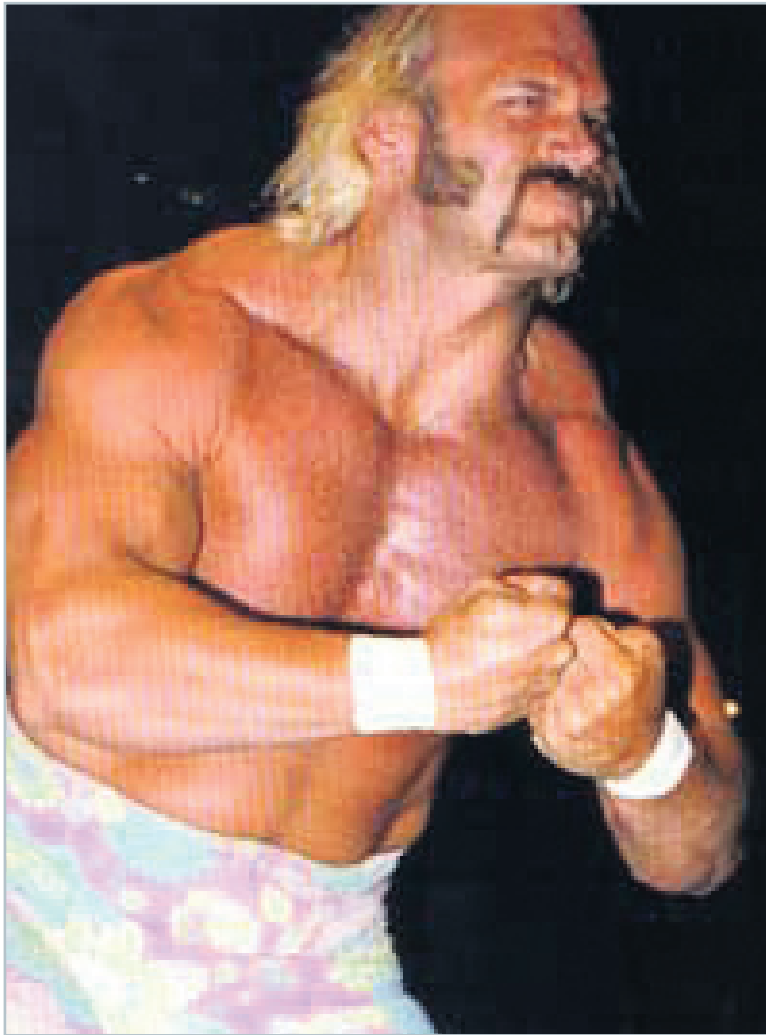
SPORTS COMMENTATOR (SC) - a sports commentator. Who would've thought?

COLOUR COMMENTATOR (CC) - a sports commentator who assists the play-by-play announcer by providing analysis and background information. Otherwords, Batman's Robin, George's Bush, or Jana's Wendt.

MASTER of CEREMONIES (MC) - a host of a public or private staged event who has his own gold and silver denim sequined jacket with "MC" on the back, and carries an Elvis signed microphone. Usually the class clown in school.

POSTGLOSSATOR (PG) - or com-mentator, a member of a European legal school which arose in France in the fourteenth century with a penchant for swearing in Latin, bashing peasants with a mace, and pillaging relatives.

Historically speaking, in medieval me-dieval scholastic philosophy "The Com-mentator" was used to refer to Averroes, after his famous commentary on Aristotle. Stick that in yer bong and break it you limey Arts degree student.



THE BREAK DOWN

Commentary teams typically fea-ture one professional commentator describing the passage of play, and another, usually an ex-player or man-ager, providing supplementary input as the game progresses.

The 'color commentator', or 'EXPERT/SPECIAL' commentator will usually re-strict his input to periods when the ball is dead or out of play, or there is no signifi-cant action on the field and will defer to the main commentator whenever there is a shot on goal or other significant event. Sometimes this unfortunately results in their being talked-over or cut short by the primary commentator.

In pubs, this scenario would escalate to the two largest set blokes having a stoush, because being full if piss, there would be nothing left to do but barney over the fact that someone can't keep his big fat mouth shut.

Additionally, former players and man-agers appear as pundits, carrying out a similar role to the co-commentator dur-ing the build-up to the match, at (1/4, 3/4) half-time and post-game. In English spheres, the motorsports coverage may have as many as two 'color men' in the John Wilkes Boothe for a given broad-cast.

WOG VIEWS

In NORSELANDS the term expert-kommentator (expert commentator) is used for a knowledgeable sidekick to the play-by-play announcer. Thank-fully he is charged with providing the slapstick, the Costello to Tony's Ab-bott.

In Latino-speaking countries, the po-sition is known as a comentarista (com-mentator), in opposition to the narrador (narrator) who describes the action, and is not to be confused with Conquistador, Matador or Valmador of whom nothing nice can be said apart from Pig Fascist. In France, the term is "consultant" in op-position to the "commentateur sportif" (who is also a journalist) and spends the other half of his time seducing every-one's wife. In some countries, the two-person commenting team is not used.

In Germany, most broadcasted Fussbol matches feature a single play-by-play announcer, who is expected to provide background information and statistics by himself. This is Deutsche Fantastik at its finest. When a two-person commentat-ing team is used (for example often in Motorsports or Winter sports) the second man (normally a former athlete) is called "Experte". And just as vell, as ve could half another Putsch.



HELLS HEELS

Though not always the case, in cer-tain types of sports entertainmnet (eg: WWE), the color commentator is usu-ally a "heel sympathizer" (or a sup-porter of the "bad guys") as opposed to the play-by-play announcer, who is more or less the "voice of the fans" as well as supporters of the "good guys".

Though both are supposed to show neutral stance while announcing, the color commentator (especially when they support heels) are usually more blat-ant about their stance than the play-by-play announcer. The most notorious was former Governor of Minnesota, Predator superstar, the man with 30 inch pythons; my hero, Jesse 'The Body' Ventura and Bobby 'The Brain' Heenan. These dudes pioneered the "heel sympathizer" for color commentary in wrestling. In cricket, one could argue that Tony 'Keys' Grieg and Bill 'Pidgeon' Lawry did the same for WSC.

HEARING IS BELIEVING

In conclusion, lets remember that the voice has more distinction than the face.

A freak like Billy Connolly only comes along once every two thousand years, for the rest of the time we can settle intot he armchair knowing that we are being mentally stimulated with mediocrity and mundaneness so long as Martin Tyler or Richie Benaud is at the helm. Here are some classic quotes courtesy of various PC's, MC's and Nacho flavoured CC's.

"And this is Gregoriava from Bulgaria. I saw her snatch this morning and it was amazing!" - (Pat Glenn, weightlifting commentator.)

"One of the reasons Arnie (Arnold Palm-er) is playing so well is that, before each tee shot, his wife takes out his balls and kisses them. Oh my! What have I just said??" - (US PGA Commentator.)

"So Bob, where's that eight inches you promised me last night?" - (Female news anchor to weatherman)

"And here's Moses Kiptanui, the 19 year old Kenyan, who turned 20 a few weeks ago." - (David Coleman)

After playing Cameroon in the 1990 world cup finals: "We didn't underesti-mate them. They were just a lot better than we thought." - (Bobby Robson)

On the difficulties of adjusting to playing football and living in Italy: "It was like being in a foreign country." - (Ian Rush)

Jimmy Hill: "Don't sit on the fence, Ter-ry. What chance do you think Germany has of getting through? Terry Venables: "I think it's 50-50."

"Ballesteros felt much better today after a 69 yesterday." - (Steve Ryder covering the US Masters)

"A brain Scan revealed that Andrew Caddick is not suffering from stress frac-ture of the shin." - (Jo Sheldon)

"There have been injuries and deaths in boxing, but none of them serious." - (Alan Minter)

"He's pulling him off! The Spanish man-ager is pulling his captain off!" - (George Hamilton)

"Here we are in the Holy Land of Israel - a Mecca for tourists." - (David Vine)

And the mother load... "Julian Dicks is everywhere. It's like they've got eleven Dicks on the field." - Metro Radio

"... and later we will have action from the men's cockless pairs." - Sue Barker

*Sic vis pacem, para bellum
Cogito Ergo Sum
Ad Nauseum
Tsiganus Tacticus United FC*

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Season 1972

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The highs and lows of 1972

THE year 1972 saw some of greatest highs and deepest lows of Australian football.

Among the highlights were a successful tour of south Asia and New Zealand which contributed to the eventual first World Cup qualification in 1974, the first victory by Australia over an English touring club when Wolverhampton Wanderers were beaten and a draw against Santos for whom Pele played in the twilight of his career. The lows included an unbalanced interstate club tournament which was anticipated to be the forerunner for a national league and the expulsion of Croatia from the Victorian State League after a pitch invasion and a brawl and the botched withdrawal from the Oceania Confederation of FIFA which was aimed at securing membership of the Asian Confederation instead.

The year began with the usual optimism despite falling crowds for league matches in New South Wales. The Ampol Cup in NSW reversed the trend with some highly competitive matches drawing a 37 per cent increase at the start of the season. Plans for a national director of coaching were centred on a highly credentialed FIFA coach Dietmar Kramer, but his appointment did not occur. A number of tours had been planned including Borussia Munchengladbach whose visit was cancelled for fear of poor attendances and losses. Dundee from Scotland, Wolves and Santos did appear however.

Dundee kicked off the touring season with two-one win over Australia on 17 May in Adelaide. Jimmy Wilson and Jocky Scott put the Dark Blues two-up inside 18 minutes, but Noddy Alston pulled a goal back in 27, but Australia could not break through again. Apart from a four-two win over Victoria three days earlier most of Dundee's matches were blow-outs. Queensland was drubbed 9-0, New South Wales was hammered 6-1, while there were 9-1 wins over the ACT and 16-1 against a Northern Rivers select.

Wolverhampton Wanderers were next to arrive and had a close shave with South Australia getting up by the odd goal in five, but ran up six-two against Queensland and three without reply in the West. In the internationals, Australia recorded its first victory over a touring English club side with a one-nil win at Olympic Park, thanks to an 84th minute goal by Noddy Alston. In the Sydney match played the following day, Australia drew two-all with Ray Baartz putting the Socceroos ahead in the first minute following lead-up work by Billy Rogers and Terry Butler. After John McAlle equalized from a corner, Baartz struck again in 36 minutes from a George Harris through ball, beating two defenders along the way. Hugh Curran equalised late on when Peter Wilson froze as the ball came across.

Five days later Santos with Pele in its line-up was also held to a two-all draw. Jimmy Rooney scored a cracker and Ray Baartz added the other. Orlando Pereira and Edu scored for Santos. The match nearly did not take place as Santos insisted in having the match fee paid before they would take the field, so there was a frantic scramble by the ASF to raise the readies.

Meanwhile in Victoria there was a major controversy when Croatia was thrown out of the State League after a match at Olympic Park against Hakoah. The referee, Jimmy Brennan, sent off Croatia full back Hugh Gunn and later he was about to penalise another player when some members of the Croatia support came over the fence and made for the ref. The protestors bailed up the players and the referee in the dressing rooms till long after the match and the VSF tribunal threw the book at Croatia. The political situation in Australia was highly charged at the time with fire bombs being set off near Yugoslav premises in Sydney and a number of young Australian Croatians being killed in an abortive attempt to invade Yugoslavia. The VSF argued at the time and in a subsequent court case that



Jim Armstrong (right) scores the first of his four goals for South Melbourne Hellas against APIA in the interstate tournament. Photo: Soccer World, 1972.



Lou Kastner dives to save for George Cross against Hakoah in the interstate tournament. Photo: Soccer World, 1972.

the suspension was entirely the result of football related matters however. Several of the Croatia stars including Billy Vojtek and Jimmy Mackay moved to Sydney clubs when Croatia was banned.

At the end of the domestic season the ASF ran an interstate competition involving the top four clubs in New South Wales and Victoria. Hakoah, APIA, Marconi and St George represented NSW and South Melbourne Hellas, JUST, Melbourne Hungaria and George Cross turned out for Victoria. The northerners won all the matches in the first two rounds and attendances fell away. The tournament was billed as a trailer for a national league but it did not inspire confidence in that idea. Despite a revival by the Vics in the later rounds, particularly by Hellas, it was Marconi which won the title, beating St George one-nil in the final.

Sir Arthur George and the ASF were keen to break away from the Oceania confederation

and join Asia instead. Late in the year Australia resigned from Oceania, but without securing the move to Asia. As a result the country remained unaffiliated to FIFA's structure at the end of the year.

It is interesting to read Paul Dean's contemporary assessment of the year in Soccer World. Among the pluses he mentioned were that the ASF won the right to host Australia's World Cup qualifying group in 1973. There was finance from the Rothmans company for a national director of coaching. The NSW Federation bought Parklea for future development. Frank Arok won four out of five trophies available to NSW clubs. Joe Marston took over APIA again as full-time manager-coach. But there was poor promotion of the game by the clubs. Paul Dean incidentally is the pen-name of Andrew Dettre, long-time editor of Soccer World, who handed over the reins to Lou Gautier at the start of 1973.



Adrian 'Noddy' Alston on the charge. Photo: Soccer World, 1972.



Pele pursued by Ray Richards when the Socceroos played Santos. Photo: Soccer World, 1972.

Below: Manfred Schaefer flies over John McAlle when the Socceroos took on Wolverhampton Wanderers.

Photo: Soccer World, 1972.



Scullion signs for Coleraine

David Scullion has agreed a one-year contract with Coleraine

Former Glentoran and Dungannon Swifts winger David Scullion is returning to the Irish League with Coleraine.

After leaving the Glens in February 2009, 26-year-old Scullion played for Derry City and then had a spell in Australia with Richmond Eagles.

He is Bannside's boss David Platt's third major signing of the summer following Crusaders defender Aaron Black and Linfield's Johnny Harkness.

"Scullion knows what is required to play in the Premiership," said Platt.

"I have admired him for some time and he will give us options up front."

Scullion has signed a one-year contract with Coleraine.

-BBC World Service



Former Richmond player David Scullion has agreed a one-year contract with Irish club Coleraine. PHOTO: ANITA MILAS



BOO'S WORLD

With Mark Boric



Another instance of the lights going out in the VPL this week, with floodlight failure seeing the Dandenong Thunder v Northcote City game abandoned. It will be interesting to see how the FFV handle the situation, given a history of conflicting and inconsistent precedents.

The rules now seem to clearly state that the game will have to be replayed in full with the score going back to 0-0. It's very harsh on Northcote, who were leading 4-1 at the time. That is unless they can convince someone to "do a Pignata" and get the game to resume at 4-1 in the 58th minute.

The new A-League season is imminent and the big question remains - who has Paul The Psychic Octopus predicted to win the comp? The answer - no one. Once again Paul swims idly in his tank, letting another opportunity slip by. Does not Germany have their own versions of Harry M Miller or Max Markson? Agents that would make the most of someone's fifteen minutes of fame

are what is required.

Melbourne Victory have yet to sign a new striker. Perhaps they are following the Pim Verbeek plan against Germany and intend to play without any. There is still Robbie Kruse, but banking on him to remain uninjured the way he flops around up front is probably something Paul the Octopus wouldn't do.

Melbourne Heart now have a number one international ticket holder with John Bon Jovi taking the mantle. I could use various Bon Jovi song titles and lyrics to make some stupid puns, but instead I will go all Forrest Gump and say that's all I have to say about that.

The longer it takes the FFA to find a new Socceroos coach, the more it becomes likely that Aurelio Vidmar will be leading us into the next Asian Cup. It is a worrying prospect. At the last tournament I recall Graham Arnold blaming a lack of effort from



Do not adjust your set. I repeat, DO NOT ADJUST YOUR SET.

certain players who did not want to be there. Will Vidmar be blaming a pissant country?

Fox Sports will be running an A-League Fantasy Football competition. I think most would agree that the actual Fox Sports A-League Fantasy involves either Mel McLaughlin or Lara Pitt. Most probably both.

In news from Japan, Socceroo striker Josh Kennedy has gotten a haircut. Now all he needs to do is get a real job.

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A-League Friendlies

Glory beats Reds

Two goals in the final five minutes from new signing Michael Baird has helped Perth Glory beat Adelaide United 3-1 in a pre-season friendly at Hindmarsh stadium.

Baird struck in the 86th and 89th minutes after Sergio van Dijk equalised for the Reds late in the second half.

The Glory open their 2010/11 Hyundai A-League campaign on Friday 6 August against the North Queensland Fury at nib Stadium (formerly ME Bank Stadium). Kick-off is at 8pm

The Reds open their 2010/11 Hyundai A-League campaign on Friday 6 August against the Newcastle Jets at Hindmarsh Stadium (Kick-Off 7.30pm ACST).

Match Details

Adelaide United FC 1 (van Dijk 77')
Perth Glory 3 (Jelic 17', Baird 86'/89')
Referee: Steven Toth
Crowd: 1,833 @ Hindmarsh Stadium

GOLD COAST DOWNS FURY

A SOLITARY goal from up and coming striker Golgol Mebrahtu was enough to claim victory for Gold Coast United as they ran out 1-0 winners over Hyundai A-League rivals North Queensland Fury at Carrara Stadium.

Miron Bleiberg's men dominated the match and will feel the margin of victory should have been greater after enjoying the lion's share of possession and creating a number of good chances in the first 45 minutes.

Mebrahtu's decisive strike came on the quarter-hour, the youngster skipping round Fury 'keeper Justin Pasfield and finishing calmly after Joel Porter's precise through ball opened up the visitor's defence.

Match Details
GOLD COAST UNITED 1
(Mebrahtu 15')
NORTH QUEENSLAND FURY 0
HT: 1-0
Referee: Matt Gillett

Jets suffer defeat at the hands of Roar

The Newcastle Jets have been defeated 1-0 by Brisbane Roar in their pre-season trial match at Port Macquarie Regional Stadium this afternoon.

In four previous pre-season visits to the region the Jets had not claimed a victory, and a late penalty by Ivan Franjic again saw the Novocastrians taste defeat in the Hastings.

The Jets nearly broke the deadlock in the 10th minute, though, through Iraqi livewire Ali Abbas. The winger's right-



Glory keeper Tando Velaphi at full stretch as Daniel Mullen closes in. PHOTO: ADAM BUTLER

footed strike flew wide of the target after some fine lead-up work down the right flank by Labinot Haliti and Marko Jesic created the chance.

Match Details
Newcastle Jets: 0
Brisbane Roar: 1 (Franjic 85' pen.)
Referee: Stuart WOLFE

Luckless in Launceston

The Central Coast Mariners have drawn with a second Hyundai A-league opponent in as many weeks, after a questionable disallowed first half goal saw them forced to settle for a scoreless draw against Melbourne Victory at Launceston's Aurora Stadium.

"It's always good to gauge ourselves against one of the best teams in the league

and (Melbourne are) probably the most successful team in the history of the A-League at the moment, and I think we learned a few lessons but overall I was very happy," said Mariners Head Coach Graham Arnold.

Match Details
Central Coast Mariners 0
Melbourne Victory 0

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KAT'S CORNER

Home grown coaches for Socceroo job

Yes, that would be nice and I can't see why not, but choosing the correct people to groom as the future Socceroo coaches requires they meet certain criteria.

Football intelligence, people skills, media skills, presentation and both a successful playing and proven coaching track record. Now that would take him to be between 40 to 50 years of age - nothing less or more. So there it is in a nut shell.

The possible Aussie candidates would need to come from our stock of former Socceroo players who are presently involved in coaching jobs either at A-League or National team level, meaning the field is narrowed even more. Are these people capable of leading the Socceros one day? Gary van Egmond? Aurilio Vidmar? Graham Arnold? Food for thought.

Mark Bosnich speaks about specialized coaches and how good the goalkeeper coaches were when was coached by Ron Corry and Jim Fraser, and I can't help but to agree.

That brings me to the next point, that if it's good enough for the goalkeepers then why don't we consider employing specialised coaches for the defenders,

midfielders and strikers of our National team?

Sasho Petrovski - "Not ready to quit"

The Newcastle Jets striker was one of the key stars in the opening season of the Hyundai A-League when he helped take Sydney FC to their first Championship in 2005/6.

In that debut season, he proved his NSL goal-every-second-game credentials by becoming the A-League's second highest goal scorer and also notched up the second highest number of assists.

After two seasons in Sky Blue, with 43 games and 14 goals under his belt, and then aged 32, management feared he was past his best and released him. He then moved to the Central Coast and scored another 14 goals in 44 games, and now has settled at the Newcastle Jets.

Now aged 35, Petrovski still has no plans to hang up his boots any time soon.

He says "I'm going good - enjoying it, doing well, no injuries or anything. It's not amazing, it's just intelligent."

"I'm just taking it year by year - hopefully this will be a good year for me. Last year was a bit quiet, playing wise,

but hopefully I will get the chance to prove to the boss that I can still perform at the highest level here.

But although he has outlasted all the coaches who thought he was past it, he takes full responsibility for any lack of faith they might once have had...and is determined to prove that Sasho Petrovski is a survivor. If he feels his body is up to it then I can't see why coaches are writing him off. He can score goals, he has the experience, and you'd be a fool to question the passion.

The men that made Harry Numerous coaches, scouts and mentors have tall tales of their involvement in the blossoming of Australia's favourite footballing son.

Ultimately it is Harry Kewell whose natural ability, hard work and determination shaped his destiny, but without the guidance of certain individuals along the way, who knows how different his career might have turned out.

This is the same formula that every young footballer must map out if they want to make it. From his first coach to his trusted agent and confidante and from his Leeds youth coach to the physio who saved his body, there have been some significant figures in the moulding of a Socceroo legend.

Australian international with 25 caps, Australian Player of the Year, winner of 4 NSL championships, 3 NSL Cups, 557 first grade games, 97 goals from 1976-1996. Played for St George, Sydney Olympic, Apia, Marconi, Melita Eagles and Larissa (Greece). Rated as one of the most technically gifted players ever produced in Australia. Now involved with player development and player management. www.technikfootball.com



Not even Harry could stop from going Dutch.... PIC: GEOFF JONES

The message here is clear; every coach shapes a player. The importance of choosing the correct coach who will help shape your son is paramount to the player's development. Next time you are thinking of someone to better your son, make sure you do the homework and opt for someone that has been successful.

Dimitrios Petratos
"AUSTRALIA has begun the AFF Under-19's Championships in fine style with a 1-0 victory over Korea Republic with Dimitrios Petratos scoring the only goal of the game.

Sydney FC youngster Petratos squeezed in a shot from an acute angle on 23 minutes for the decisive goal in Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam."

For all the Greeks out there, we finally have a few players from Greek-Australian origin to cheer about - the other being Terry Antonis who is also from Sydney FC.

I've had the pleasure of coaching both them, and I can tell you that both are great young players who are destined for great football careers.

See you next week.

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THE KATSA

With George Katsamboukas



'Lights out and Everyone's Home' occurred on Saturday night at Dandy Thunder's ground, where the Northcote Boys were cruising to an Away Happy End, leading 4-1, when all of a sudden the lights went out.

Over to the House of Darebin for a determination as to what will happen with this match. However, the Blue Boys would feel a touch peeved if this match has to be replayed from the beginning with a 0-0 score line.

There are 4 things certain in life:

1. Always running out of J Walker
2. Taxes
3. Night matches in Victoria being disrupted due to Power Failures.
4. More Taxes

Gulum Going Great Guns

Over to Turkey we go where Ersan Gulum has realized a lifelong dream and signed a 12 month deal with Turkish Powerhouse, Besiktas.

Gulum played his junior jockey in Melbourne, and is one of the finest young left sided players that I have seen. How-

ever, he has not been selected for any FFA Australian National team as he did not go through the "System" of that great developmental organization, the Australian Institute of Sport.

I say that tongue in cheek as it seems that quality players such as Gulum - who because they are playing professionally overseas - are out of sight, out of mind when it comes to selecting National teams.

As he has dual citizenship he is also eligible to play for Turkey, and he is now waiting to see which country, Australia or Turkey, gives him a call up.

All OK with AEK

AEK Athens are in town and their arrival bought back memories of their last visit here, where a 16 year old Katsa who even at that young ripe age had the liver of a 55 year old, boarded the train bound for Richmond to see the Victorian State team take on AEK Athens.

A very bleak day it was where the rain waterlogged the Olympic Park surface, and the now Melbourne Victory El Supremo, Gary Cole, scored a hat trick to

help the Vics to a 4-0 Happy End. Carl Gilder, scored the other to cap off a resounding victory.

A few days later AEK played NSW in an astonishing 5-5 draw, with two goals that day coming from GW's very own Eddie Krncevic.

Good to see the Greeks have learnt a thing or two about defending since then. Where was Otto when you needed him?!

Home Stretch

Back from the future we come and the Local Leagues are starting to take shape with the contenders being separated from the pretenders, the next few weeks will further separate these 2 groups.

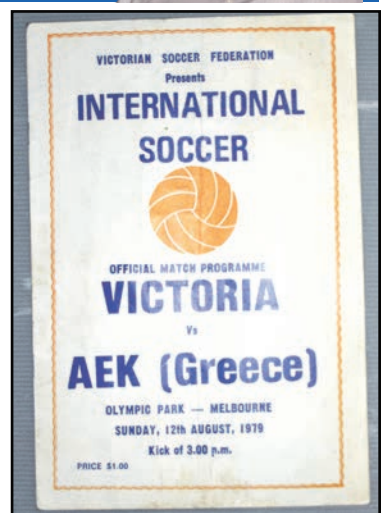
We are close to the business end of the Season - for some the Spoils, for the others The Westgate.

This is Katsa - Just as you have known him

And remember, keep your Friends close, and your Club Powerbrokers closer!



Gary Cole in action for The Mighty Vics.



The match program from the Victoria v AEK match played Sunday 12th August 1979. Price: \$1
Gary Cole's hat-trick: priceless!



With Leroy Robinson in the UK



Can The EPL's Bad Boy Change His Ways?

By Leroy Robinson

There's less than three weeks to go until the start of the new season. And, believe it or not, I had nothing to write about...then there I was counting the minutes and hours, when my delicate constitution was unsettled by this shocking quote from Sky Sports website:

"Watching some of the performances in the World Cup over the summer I think that on form, I'm as good as anybody in this country."

Can you guess the source? It is obviously not someone lacking confidence in his ability. Then again, given the paucity of performances from some countries, the words could come from an Italian, a Frenchman or even a Brazilian. One clue, it's an Englishman. Still stumped? He went on to elaborate:

"I don't say that lightly and I have to go out and prove that, but surely every midfielder in this country should be thinking like that?"

Ok, now we've narrowed it down to several hundred players, I'll spill. It was Joey Barton, the Newcastle United player. Whilst I wouldn't normally give anything Barton says much credence, surely it says something about the state of the national team when Barton – which some liken to a thug in football boots – starts speaking in such terms. Worst of all, he actually has a point.

How many times have we watched the goggle box and, after a misplaced pass of a few yards, thought "I could do better than these guys?" During a World Cup in which England's players needed a map to pass further than a few yards, I must have uttered it more than once. So what must players like Barton et al be thinking? Answer – exactly the same. Joey sums it up:

"They should be looking at (the England squad) it and saying, 'that's where I want to be and that's where I can go.'"

The fact I find myself agreeing with the former Manchester City player's belief that England places are up for grabs – even to a man who once assaulted ex-colleague Ousmane Dabo, and was sent to prison after a Boxing Day night out for punching a helpless man in the street 20 times in what the judge called a "violent and cowardly act" – doesn't fill me with pleasure. At the time of the assault Barton summed up everything about some footballers I disliked; the arrogance of money, lack of discipline and the idea that players can do what they like – short of murder – and continue playing after their punishment. Whether I like the system or not doesn't take away from the fact that the man fans love to hate is



Crunchtime! Never one to be too far away from the law, Joey Barton and a couple of Bobbies get themselves acquainted.

back in the EPL and – after a few second chances – is ready for a new start to his career and to put his newfound maturity to the test. To that end put August 22nd in your diary. They play Aston Villa and the last time he faced Gabriel Agbonlahor in November 2008 he was alleged to have made racial comments to the Villa striker. Should be interesting!

"I'm a much more rounded footballer now than I was when I first signed for this club. Injuries have restricted my chances to show that."

That's all well and good, but there was never any doubt in Manchester or Newcastle about his ability. The problem in the past has been his ability, or inability, to stop his fists from colliding with the faces of others. However, I have no problem with Barton harbouring international ambitions. He is 27 and should be approaching the prime of his career. He also plays in a defensive midfield position that England has had a few problems with – and looking at his quotes again he must have been watching Gareth Barry tread water in South Africa with glee. Whatever his opinions he should be looking toward that other enfant terrible of EPL season's past – Lee Bowyer – for inspiration.

In April 2005 Bowyer punched Newcastle teammate Kieran Dyer on the pitch (what is it with Newcastle and thugs?) in an incident which saw both men sent off. At the time Bowyer's career looked destined for freefall. He then joined West Ham where he rebuilt his career with some good performances. During his time there they even signed a

certain Kieran Dyer, with seemingly no repercussions.

Before this, as a player for Charlton in 1996, Bowyer strolled into a McDonalds in London and ordered a cheeseburger.

According to the Daily Mail he tossed it to the ground, demanding another cheeseburger, to be served by a white person and not a "f**king Paki". He and his friends then launched a tirade of racist abuse, hurling chairs at the server. Bowyer pleaded guilty to affray. Bowyer was also part of a mob (along with Spurs' Jonathan Woodgate) who chased Sarfraz Najeib outside a Leeds nightclub in January 2000, where he was viciously beaten. Bowyer was cleared but Woodgate was found guilty of affray.

After West Ham Bowyer moved to the sedate spotlight of Birmingham City, and Barton would be wise to adopt the calmer on-pitch attitude of the older and wiser Bowyer, especially in the minefield of the north-east where he will be goaded and provoked far more than he ever was during his visits to nightclubs. If he does start performing it will be interesting what stance Fabio Capello adopts toward the player.

Until then it is better Barton focuses on the monumental task of keeping Newcastle in the EPL, especially as they haven't really strengthened the squad to much of a degree, and go into the season with a coach in his first season in the Premier League. Perhaps this is one situation where the fighting spirit of Joey Barton will be essential!

Milner: From Villain To Super-Villain

In the week that West Ham co-chair-

man David Sullivan pooh-poohed Aston Villa's reported interest in Scott Parker, in part because he wasn't for sale and in part because they couldn't afford him, you'd think the Villains and their fans would be ecstatic that Manchester City are most likely willing to spend in excess of £20million for an unexceptional player like James Milner.

City may even throw in Stephen Ireland, if reports are true. To me that's like selling your rust bucket and having the buyer toss in a BMW along with the cash. Charity could be alive and well at Eastlands if Aston Villa gets Ireland and £24million.

Leaving aside Milner not being any better than what they already have, the transfer has seen some comments on forums accusing him of being a greedy boy, (he is 24 by the way so go figure) and of being an ungrateful wretch whose career was rescued by Villa, only for him to want to become a bench-warmer at City. I can't argue with the bench-warmer theory but as for being greedy, how does that work?

If you're offered a pay rise by a competitor to do the same job is it really greed to leave? That of course assumes he will be offered a pay rise. What if he was leaving to be on the same money? Would the Villa fans feel better about that scenario? Of course not. He wants to leave, and whatever the reason, fans will be upset. If I'm Milner, aside from the likely pay rise, I'd ask myself which team gives me the best chance of winning right now. Is it the team that finished 5th and strengthened or is it Aston Villa?

The complaints from fans are a typi-

cal smokescreen. Yes, I feel for the Villa fans, starved of success. No fan likes to be jilted by a player they love, so it's far better to convince oneself that the player is leaving simply for the money, and not because it gives him a better chance of winning. To admit the latter is depressing and defeatist. Fans have to display a certain degree of faith (AKA delusion) when it comes to such things. It is what England fans are famed for, and at club level it is no different. That is not to say that every player joins City because they give them the best chance to win. But in Milner's case I believe it is money and ambition.

That's not to say City are a bigger club than Villa but the Villa fans who complain about Milner and City's money need to understand that historically teams like Blackburn in the 1990s attracted the best players because they were throwing money around, and throwing money has been proven to give you a better chance of winning titles.

Villa fans either need to pray for a Middle Eastern takeover or for Stephen Ireland and several other players bought with the Milner money, to make up for his absence. All is not doom and gloom. They lost Gareth Barry and became a better team. If the transfer goes ahead it will leave a bitter taste with the fans but what sweeter revenge on Milner and City to finish above them?

A NEW SQUAD, SIL VOUS PLAIT
In the wake of French manager Laurent Blanc banning all 23 members of the World Cup squad from his August friendly against Norway I wondered how the England squad would look if Fabio Capello took such a measure.

Here's my squad. With the season close at hand it's worth seeing how many of these guys make the friendly against Hungary at Wembley. It could be a barometer of Capello's intent to give others a chance.

Goalkeepers – Chris Kirkland (Wigan), Paul Robinson (Blackburn), Ben Foster (Birmingham)

Defenders – Rio Ferdinand (Manchester United), Leighton Baines (Everton), Michael Mancienne (Chelsea), Micah Richards (Manchester City), Kieran Gibbs (Arsenal), Gary Cahill (Bolton), Jonathan Woodgate (Tottenham), Phil Jagielka (Everton)

Midfielders – Jack Wilshere (Arsenal), Ashley Young (Aston Villa), Lee Cartermole (Sunderland), Tom Huddlestone (Tottenham), Scott Parker (West Ham), Stewart Downing (Aston Villa), Adam Johnson (Manchester City),

Strikers – Bobby Zamora (Fulham), Darren Bent (Sunderland), Gabriel Agbonlahor (Aston Villa), Nathan Delfouneso (Aston Villa), Theo Walcott (Arsenal)

CORRECTION: Last week I wrote that Liverpool had signed French striker Loic Remy. As I write he is still a Nice player. Serves me right for believing everything I read!



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Will Arsenal challenge for the EPL Title?

Last season was reasonably successful for Arsenal Football Club, as they challenged for the Premier League title for much of the year, capped off with a decent run in the Champions League. But will the Gunners be able to challenge for the Premier League crown this time around?

As I have suggested, last season was fairly successful for the North London club, as they managed to challenge deep into the season for all major honours, doing so without spending a great deal of money in terms of transfers and wages when compared to their fellow title rivals. And with every season the young side that Arsenal possess can only get better, which they certainly proved by continually proving naysayers wrong.

However, as the new Premier League season edges ever closer, once again Arsenal are somewhat unfancied in regards to their pursuit of English League glory, with many pundits already predicting that the league title will be contested by Manchester United and Chelsea only, with the Gunners being left behind to fight for third or fourth with the likes of Manchester City, Everton, Aston Villa, Liverpool, and their bitter rivals Tottenham. But do Arsenal's fortunes next season lie with the likes of their main city rivals, or will they be able to once again prove many people wrong and seriously contend for top honours?

Of course much depends on whether they manage to keep their undoubted best player Cesc Fabregas. It seems that since the very first day after the Premier League season finished, young Cesc was on his way to Barcelona. It was news that every Arsenal fan dreaded, but ultimately expected, as Fabregas has never hidden his desire to once again play for the club of his youth.

And yet, the much expected transfer is still to take place, with the two clubs bartering over the price for one of the best midfielders in world football. On a side note, it is actually rather refreshing to see exactly how this whole saga has taken place, as all parties involved have conducted themselves admirably; displaying



After crunch talks meant Cesc Fabregas was to remain in London, the Spanish skipper hopes to spearhead Arsenal to their first EPL title since 2004.

the class that they each undoubtedly possess.

From the Barcelona point of view, they want Cesc, but aren't willing to pay an extortionate amount, whereas Arsenal want what they feel is fair compensation for one of the stars of the Premier League. And Fabregas himself is to be commended, as although his desire to join the Spanish giants is abundantly obvious, he has also suggested that if he were to remain in London he would fully commit himself to the Arsenal cause. And he did well to look embarrassed when his fellow Spain players put a Barcelona shirt on him during their World Cup celebrations.

For me, if Arsenal are to compete for the title next season then they must keep hold of Fabregas, or at least bring in a big name replacement if he does go. In a league where the top teams aren't unbeatable, losing your best player makes a massive difference. Arsenal simply aren't as good without the young Spaniard, just as Chelsea are beatable without Drogba, and United can be stopped

without Rooney. Fabregas pushes the Arsenal team around the pitch, and he is key to how they do in the league, at least for this upcoming season.

The Gunners do have some young talent that may be able to take his place, such as Jack Wilshere or Aaron Ramsay, yet it is still too soon for either to step into the role of playmaker and talisman, especially for Ramsay who still must overcome his injury problems.

Since Fabregas is still an Arsenal player right now, let's assume he will be pulling on the red shirt for the Gunners in the upcoming months. The question still remains though, can Arsenal compete?

Well, much like last season, I have to go against many pundits and suggest that Arsenal will be able to compete for the top prizes. They still have one of the best passing sides in the world, and they still are full of young talented players who on their day can beat any side put in front of them.

The Fabregas saga aside, Arsenal's

transfer dealings have certainly been interesting. It looks like next season the Gunners will be without their former captain William Gallas, and also their underutilised striker Eduardo. Gallas is obviously the bigger miss, yet Arsene Wenger has brought in a man who he deems good enough to replace the argumentative Frenchman, a man by the name of Laurent Koscielny. Little is known about the relatively young defender, which isn't that unusual when it comes to Arsene Wenger signings. Encouragingly for Arsenal fans, Wenger is also apparently still in the market for another defender, which can only help to sure up what at times last season was an average defence.

And to add to this Wenger is seemingly also very interested in bringing in a new number one goalkeeper. Last season was fairly dire for Arsenal goalkeepers, as several mistakes and missed opportunities cost the Gunners big. So far it seems like Arsenal may get the Fulham and Australia keeper Mark Schwarzer, as they have already had an offer

refused but are still looking into increasing their valuation of the big shot stopper. The Aussie was great last season, and would be a consistent presence in goal for Arsenal, something which they have lacked since they last won the title. If there is one area that their rivals have been head and shoulders better than the Gunners in the last few years it's in goal, and Wenger looks like he is finally looking to redress the balance.

Wenger has also brought in a striker, Marouane Chamakh from Bordeaux, who will look to bring an uncompromising presence to the Arsenal front line. Even with the plus six footer Bendtner in their line up, the Gunners have lacked a little muscle up front, and again Wenger seems to be addressing a weakness and making it better.

Although perhaps a shame that they couldn't get him, it should also encourage Gooners that Wenger passed up on signing Joe Cole. An undoubted talent, who would have fitted into the Arsenal style of play, Cole is over thirty, and has had little football over the last couple of seasons, so paying him more wages than most of your squad does not seem quite right. Cole may flourish at Liverpool, but it was still probably a good decision from Wenger to not over-pursue the Englishman.

Of course, even though it seems that Wenger is doing everything right, Arsenal still will be more or less the same team as last season, as will Chelsea and as will United. The Arsenal youngsters are continuing to get better, but I'm still left thinking that even with Fabregas staying, the Gunners are one or two players short of really contending. I do think that they will be in the top three, possibly even the top two, yet I believe that come to the crunch, as has been the case in the last few years, Arsenal will just come up a little short. However, as I have suggested previously in this very column, they will still be massively entertaining, they will remain one of the few clubs actually seeing a profit financially, and they still have a very bright future.

As a Gunner myself though, it would sure be nice to actually win something again.

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IN OFF THE POST

mailbag@goalweekly.com



To Whom It May Concern,

I refer to your article entitled: "Round of upsets greets SL1" by Aritro Abedin, page 31, Goal Weekly, Vol. 6, No.22, Monday 19th July 2010 - in reference to the quotation "There's 8 games left, and anyone can be there. From now on we've got to make sure there's no shagging, no fagging, and no night clubbing..."

I find the direct quotation of this part of the statement to be very offensive, demeaning and derogative to various human social groups and activities in our general community.

In fact the choice of unedited words quoted are contravening the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act (1984) and at State level the Equal Opportunity Act (1995). The power of language and choice of words is a very powerful and influencing medium. In today's society printed media have a duty of care and ethical requirements to fulfill to its readership.

Your paper in regards to this article and this quotation has grossly fallen short of fulfilling these required standards.

I require your paper to give a public apology in its next edition to counteract this severe failure of linguistic editing.

Charlie Buttigieg.

Dear GW,

I refer to your article headed "ROUND OF UPSETS GREETSL1" in particular the quotation which appears quoting "...no shagging, no fagging and no night clubbing..."

Being an avid football supporter and a regular Goal Weekly reader I must express my disappointment and concern at the lack of editing prowess shown by your editor.

Whilst I understand that the reporter is quoting an individual it surprises me that the editor would allow the use of the words such

as "shagging" and "fagging". I find these words very demeaning and inappropriate to be used in any context because of their multi-layered meanings which could be misconstrued by various members of our community in particular the younger generation.

Yours in sport,
GM

Dear Readers,

In response to your letters, the buck ultimately stops with the editor and I take full responsibility for the inclusion of such comments in the publication. I also apologise for any offence it has obviously caused.

Whilst the comments in hindsight may not be deemed appropriate to appear in print, my understanding of the meaning of "fagging" in the context of that specific sentence referred to "smoking" and not to one's sexual preferences.

Nevertheless, a valid point has

been raised in regards to the quality of journalism, and my only defence forthcoming is that under the pressure of trying to complete the publication on time to a bona fide running deadline, it is something that just 'slipped under the radar' in production.

If you are not aware, GW is basically produced by volunteers - myself included - and contrary to popular belief, we are not a full-time organisation that has the luxury of sub-editors and the like.

Regrettably, mistakes and errors will tend to occur every now and then in production, even though the reporter in this instance, Aritro Abedin, could argue that he was merely bringing you, the reader, exactly what the coach said that day - can't ask for more precise or thorough reporting than that.

Also, please keep in mind that all of our writers, contributors and photographers righteously do what they

do on the weekends completely off their own bat - all in the name of football.

It would be great if the various federation bodies actually supported us a bit more, and then just maybe we could afford the time to bring you an even better product to fill the vacuum for grass-roots football..

Anyway, I digress, but thank you for your support and the feedback. I embrace it like an 'away' goal deep into injury time that sends us through to the next round and knocks the home team out of the cup.

I really do appreciate you taking the time to voice your opinion - I just wish there were more fans out there like yourselves who could be bothered to do the same.

Yours in football,
Ed



Couch Potato Dept.

* ALL TIMES ARE AEDT



Monday July 26th, 2010

5:30 pm FIFA Futbol Mundial - Weekly magazine show that travels the globe to bring you the stars of today, the talents of tomorrow and the heroes of the past.

Thursday July 29th, 2010

11:15 pm FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup 2010: Semi Final 1 - Live - From Ruhrstadion, Bochum, Germany.

1:45 am FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup 2010: Semi Final 2 - Live - From Bielefelder Alm, Bielefeld, Germany.

Sunday August 1st, 2010

10:30 am Football Asia - Provides the latest news and updates of the various football leagues across Asia.

11:00 am Les Murray's Football Feature: FIFA World Cup Best-Of Highlights - Highlights of Australian Group Matches.

12:00 pm FIFA Futbol Mundial - Weekly magazine show that travels the globe to bring you the stars of today, the talents of tomorrow and the heroes of the past.

10:30 pm FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup Germany 2010: Final - Live From Bielefelder Alm, Bielefeld, Germany.



The Futbol Town Show
Every Monday
7pm

SMFC TV
Channel 31
Every Saturday
10.00am

Extra Time Magazine Show
Every Wednesday
8pm

The Green Gully Football Show
Every Saturday
10.30am



Global Football Show
Jacob Kagi and Ian Hooper discusses local, national and international football every Thursday night from 7.30-9pm on WA's SportFM 91.3.

WAG OF THE WEEK



Pamela Camassa Age: 24
Insignificant Other: Liverpool and Italy Central Midfielder, Alberto Aquilani.

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Kevin Townson

Melbourne Knights FC



PHOTO: STEVE STAREK

FULL NAME: Kevin Townson
BIRTHPLACE: Liverpool, England
BIRTH DATE: 19/04/1983
HEIGHT: 5'7"
WEIGHT: 72
MARRIED: Might as well be
CAR: Mate Ergio's Ford Falcon, pure class!
NICKNAME: Mouser
PREVIOUS CLUBS: Rochdale, Macclesfield, Dandenong city
REPRESENTATIVE HONOURS: England U19s
CHILDHOOD FOOTBALL HERO: Robbie Fowler
FAVOURITE O/S PLAYER: Robbie Fowler
FAVOURITE HAL PLAYER: Don't want to bore u again but Robbie Fowler
FAVOURITE FORMER SOC-CEROO: Danny Tilatto

FAVOURITE CURRENT SOC-CEROO: None
MOST MEMORABLE MATCH AS A PLAYER: Scoring 2 against Fulham in the Worthington Cup
MOST MEMORABLE MATCH AS A FAN: Liverpool winning the Champions League after trailing 3:0 at half-time to AC Milan
MOST MEMORABLE GOAL YOU'VE SCORED: A volley against Leyton Orient for Rochdale
EARLIEST FOOTBALL MEMORY: Picking the ball up and costing us a penalty under 7s
FUNNIEST MOMENT IN FOOTBALL: Getting sacked for urinating in the car park at Macclesfield
BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT: Watching England lose to Germany 4:1

WORST INJURY: Touch wood nothing serious just the usual knocks and bumps
MOST DIFFICULT OPPONENT: Pascal Chimbonde
FAVOURITE AWAY GROUND: John Cain Memorial - been their 10 times this season
SUPERSTITIONS: None, touch wood!
TYPICAL MATCH DAY MEAL: Beans on Toast or Toby Patterson's fry ups
WHAT ARE YOUR STRENGTHS: My finishing
WHAT ARE YOUR WEAKNESSES: Absolutely no right foot
FAVOURITE TEAM WHEN GROWING UP: Liverpool
FAVOURITE OTHER SPORTS: Golf, Tennis, Horse Racing,
FAVOURITE OTHER

SPORTSPERSON: Tiger Woods - legend
FAVOURITE FOODS: My Mum's roast dinners
FAVOURITE ACTOR/ACTRESS: Sean Bean
HOBBIES: Playing poker
FAVOURITE HOLIDAY RESORT: Ibiza
FAVOURITE NIGHTSPOT: Re-volver
IDEAL DATE: Cheryl Cole
FAVOURITE TV SHOWS: Only Fools and Horses, Underbelly
FAVOURITE MUSIC: Depends what mood I'm in, I like a bit of everything
FAVOURITE FILM: When Saturday Comes
LAST SOCCER SHIRT YOU BOUGHT: It has got to be a Melbourne Knights shirt

FUNNIEST RUMOUR YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT YOURSELF: That I like a drink ha ha
BIGGEST INFLUENCE ON CAREER: Got to be my Mum and Dad, they have always backed me were ever I have played
BIGGEST DRAG IN SOCCER: Warming up. Sorry, Paul Magdio.
FOOTBALL AMBITION: To help Melbourne Knights stay in the Premier League and to play on for as long as I can
WHICH PERSON IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO MEET? : Nobody really. Doesn't interest me
YOUR TIP FOR THIS YEAR'S VPL: Melbourne Knights
YOUR TIP FOR THIS YEAR'S HAL: Melbourne Victory

'Chatz' almost chucked it

By Craig MacKenzie

MICHAEL Chatzitrifonas sat on the Richmond bench during last year's 2-1 loss to Preston Lions at Connor Reserve convinced that it would be his last game in charge.

Richmond's head coach turned to assistant Huss Skenderovic and told him as much but Skenderovic told him not to quit adding that things could be sorted out.

"I was at my lowest point at the club. Preston hadn't won a game all year, was deep in the relegation zone and to be perfectly honest, the result flattered us," said Chatzitrifonas.

"Straight after the game I spoke to Helmut (Kalitzki, club president) privately and told him that I should step aside, that I thought that I had gone as far as I could with this playing group."

What eventuated next surprised Chatzitrifonas. Kalitzki, who has parted company with quite a few coaches during his lengthy time at the helm said bluntly that this was not the time or place to discuss such matters and arranged to meet him the following day.

What transpired at that meeting left an indelible impression upon Chatzitrifonas and the faith and resolve of Kalitzki to stick by his man is being rewarded right now with Richmond sitting proudly on top of the Victorian Premier League ladder.

"The meeting was remarkable. At a time when I was at my most vulnerable and fragile Helmut made me feel seven feet tall.

"He told me that he had complete confidence in me. He told me that if I wanted to revamp the playing group that that was my job so we started making some hard calls. And I mean hard. It was very unpleasant for me when we decided to end George Goutzioulis's contract because I had known the Goutzioulis family for years."

Chatzitrifonas had made the call leading into the 2009 season to add a hardcore, experienced edge to his squad but now he felt a need to change tack dramatically.

"We brought in young players to the squad and it invigorated the whole group."

At the end of last season Richmond CEO Sam Laverty sat down with Chatzitrifonas to talk about the future as well as conducting a debrief on the club's third-last finish.

From that meeting a vision espoused by Laverty has come to underpin the club's philosophy and it's one that Chatzitrifonas readily embraces.

"We have a plan to provide a platform for young players to develop. Players know that if they come to Richmond and show that they have the drive and ambition to succeed at a higher level then we will assist them in that aim," he said.

There also is a reservoir of coaching acumen at the club that is the envy of most. Eddie Krncevic, Savas Saglam, Jim Maclean, Don Maclaren and Dean Hennessy are just some of those involved at Richmond. They have plenty of overseas and local contacts to add to those of Chatzitrifonas and Laverty should an emerging talent be keen to strut their stuff on a greater stage.

Then there's the Heart connection. The head coach of Melbourne's newest A-League franchise, John van't Schip, is a regular at Richmond where his son, Davey, is in the first team squad.



Winners are grinners: Richmond Eagles coach Mike Chatzitrifonas with assistant coach, Huus Skenderovic, earlier in the season. PHOTO: PETER PSARROS

Laverty also told Chatzitrifonas at last year's end-of-season meeting that the coach wouldn't be judged solely on points accumulated during the 2010 campaign and position on the league ladder. He also would be judged on providing opportunities for young players to develop.

And right now Richmond has three players in the 26- to 29-year-old bracket with every other senior squad member under 24, the majority of those under 22.

"You really need that younger energy in your team and the ability to run for the full 90 minutes," said Chatzitrifonas.

"I've got wonderful support. Savas really has an eagle eye for young talent and Huss has been instrumental in our success so far. He has taken a workload off my shoulders and he deserves a lot of praise.

"There are a lot of people involved in what we are trying to do and each and every one of them deserves credit. I truly think that there are wonderful times ahead for this club."

But coaching success is not new to the former Heidelberg United custodian. He tasted it with Oakleigh and Western Suburbs en route to Kevin Bartlett Reserve.

The Chatzitrifonas story can be traced back to his Greek migrant parents who like so many from that Mediterranean country arrived in Melbourne in the 1960s.

His father, who passed away a few years ago, was instrumental in introducing his son to football. His dad was a Heidelberg fanatic and took the young Chatzitrifonas to watch his beloved Alexander, as the club previously was known and still is among traditionalists.

"I grew up becoming a Heidelberg fan and started playing in goal for the juniors when I was 12. I made my debut for the reserves when I was 16 and ended up understudying Yakka Banovic and Jeff Olver," he said.

Chatzitrifonas made his Heidelberg senior debut in a 1987 pre-season competition at the age of 18 and called a halt to his playing career at the end of the 2002 season as Westvale's custodian in Division One.

"I'd been assisting Ange Goutzioulis that season and partway through the campaign big Aki (Ionnas) tried to get both of us to move to Oakleigh but we knocked him back."

At the end of the 2002 season Ionnas met with Chatzitrifonas and again tried to tempt him to take the coaching reins. This time he agreed.

"It was a big risk for Oakleigh but I felt I knew what was required. We went out early and signed Alex Kiratoglou and he was a big signing for us. So were Ange Goutzioulis and Juan Nilo."

"In the end it was a hard lesson to learn but an invaluable one. Just when I needed the support of the board they turned their back on me. Not Jim though. He stayed true to his word all the time. He even paid me out for the rest of the year from his own pocket."

Oakleigh romped home in the title race five points clear of runner-up Knox City and reclaimed its Premier League status.

"That's when the club was reborn in my eyes," said Chatzitrifonas. "We hadn't just assembled a strong unit we had assembled a great bunch of people and everything went to plan.

"Take nothing away from Aki because

he was an important part of it all but I also give great credit to president Jim Neofytou who really got things moving off the park."

The following season Oakleigh finished second to Green Gully but bowed out of the finals campaign with successive losses. While the club was delighted to have re-established itself as a power among Victorian football's elite, the bar had been raised now and anything less than winning the Grand Final in season 2005 would be viewed as failure by some at the club.

It was to be a tough lesson for Chatzitrifonas.

"I got fired after a round seven loss (2-1) away to Altona Magic and to be honest the way it was done left a pretty bad taste in my mouth.

"Jim (Neofytou) phoned me on Monday morning after that loss to say that there was a board meeting that night and he couldn't guarantee that I'd stay in the job. I eventually got a phone call round about midnight to tell me that I didn't have the support of the board and that I was fired. Jim stuck by me but other people who wouldn't have a clue about what was going on with the team voted against me.

"In the end it was a hard lesson to learn but an invaluable one. Just when I needed the support of the board they turned their back on me. Not Jim though. He stayed true to his word all the time. He even paid me out for the rest of the year from his own pocket.

"I was gutted. Me and my partner headed off for Queensland to get away from it all."

But Chatzitrifonas couldn't stay away from football for long. He'd quickly earned a reputation as one of the most promising coaches in Victoria and one of his admirers was Western Suburbs president Jimmy Condilis.

"It was a real challenge for me to take on the Suburbs job and try and get the club into the top league which it had failed to achieve in 25 years. There were parallels with Oakleigh at

the start in that the club was in disarray and there was unrest among the players.

"But the two years I had there (2006 and 2007) rate among the best of my coaching career. We won the Division One title in my first season and only added two players – James Stefanou and Igor Khrapko – to our squad going into the 2007 VPL."

"I think I really grew as a coach at Suburbs. There was no chequebook to wave about so it was a different experience for me.

"Everyone wrote us off in 2007. They all said that we were certainties to go back down. Fair enough we didn't win our first game until we beat Kingston at home in round seven or eight but then we beat Richmond and that set the wheels in motion.

"Then we stuttered a bit again and after losing 5-0 to the Knights we were second bottom with nine games to go.

"Things looked bad but we rallied the boys together and from that point on we didn't lose a game and eventually finished eighth.

"I rank that as one of the greatest achievements of my coaching career. We didn't have the quality of many other teams at that level but we had a superb work ethic."

No-one epitomised that work ethic more than Terry Antoniadis who finished the season on a high after winning the Gold Medal as the best player in the VPL.

No sooner had the 2007 season ended than Richmond sacked Dougie Hodgson and next day Laverty phoned Chatzitrifonas and arranged a meeting at which the senior coaching job was offered. He accepted.

"It was really hard to leave Suburbs because I got on so well with the players but I felt that to develop my career Richmond was the next step."

Once again Chatzitrifonas tasted success in his first season at his new home, guiding Richmond into the VPL finals in 2008 for the first time in the club's history.

At the conclusion of that campaign rumours circulated that Kalitzki was going to step down as president and that had an unsettling effect on the club. To what extent, if any, that played in Richmond's disappointing 2009 season will never be known but Chatzitrifonas has no interest in glancing over his shoulder at the past.

His main football focus now is where this 2010 journey will take him and his players. There are just three games to go before the finals series starts but Chatzitrifonas won't get drawn into talking about finals just yet.

"We made a pact recently that we're not going to talk about finals and we're not going to talk about finishing on top and since then we've done well. We did that because we felt that maybe the group was starting to feel the weight of expectation and pressure on them.

"Let's just see where this thing takes us. That's the way we are all approaching things right now."

If things work out in Richmond's favour it won't just be testament to the coaching ability of Chatzitrifonas and the playing ability of his squad. It also will be a personal highlight for Kalitzki and complete vindication of his courageous decision last season not to dump his senior coach when the opportunity presented itself.

**Serbia**
Partizan Belgrade will take on Finnish Champions in the third qualifying round of the UEFA Champions League following a 4:1 aggregate win over Armenia's finest Pyunik. Brazilian Cleo scored a screamer in the second leg which was enough for the black and whites to claim two victories in two matches.

Partizan has strengthened its squad after signing former captain Milan Smiljanic from Espanyol. Smiljanic known as 'Lola' had two forgettable seasons with the Primer Liga side and will now hope to revive his career and help his club qualify for the Group Stages.

Spartak Subotica and OFK Beograd both won to earn two matches against Europe's hotter teams. Spartak will face Ukrainian side Dnypar while OFK will take on Turkish giants Galatasaray. Red Star kicks off its campaign against Slovakia's Slovan Bratislava.



Vidic re-signs with United

Nemanja Vidic penned a new three year deal worth 18 million pounds with Manchester United confirming his loyalty with the English club. He has been constantly linked with moves to Real Madrid, Barcelona and AC Milan. Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson is delighted to have Vidic remaining at Old Trafford.

Left Back Aleksandar Kolarov finally signed for Manchester City in a deal worth 16 million pounds. Kolarov impressed for Italian side Lazio,



Alex Kolarov signs with City

quickly becoming one of the leagues better players. Manager Roberto Mancini couldn't hide his delight with the capture of the young Serb.

"I first saw Kolarov in his Lazio debut back in 2007. I was impressed by the speed and strength of someone so young. He was composed on the ball had an excellent delivery with his left foot and was technically very able. I have watched him a lot since then and



Smiljanic returns from Espanyol

so have the Manchester City scouts. His attacking capability is very good. He is fast and can shoot with power and accuracy.

"He also has the ability to play in numerous positions and is very good in midfield. This is an additional benefit to the team. He has a fantastic international career ahead of him. I am looking forward to working with him." The Italian said reports The Sun.

**Croatia**
Dinamo Zagreb was one goal away from beating sensationally knocked out of the Champions League. They lost the second leg to Slovenian Champions FK Koper 3:0, having won the first leg in Zagreb 5:1.

It was one of Dinamo's worst outings in European football and they can consider themselves fortunate to still be in the competition. They will take on Moldova's FC Sheriff on the 28th.

It was a bad week for Croatian sides in continental football as Sibenik and Cibalia were both knocked out. Sibenik had a 2:0 lead from the first match against Cypriot side Anorthosis but they were beaten 3:0 at home, crashing out of the competition which led to the departure of their manager.

Last minute shopping sprees

Only a few weeks remain till the commencement of many of the major European leagues and as a result the transfer window is gradually closing for many clubs, but this is not stopping some Managers from completing last minute signings and bids.

Since May, the most prominent and ongoing bidding war between two clubs, Arsenal and Barcelona, has concerned that of Spanish midfielder Cesc Fabregas.

Barcelona President Sandro Rosell said that his club will not be bullied into paying more than £42.7 million for the midfielder and was reluctant to consider a £40 million bid. As a result the deal is looking less and less as there have been no further offers for the Spaniard.

However, Fabregas has reportedly handed in a transfer request to the Arsenal board to make his dream return to Barcelona come to fruition.

Newly signed Barcelona striker David Villa has come out this week to say Fabregas would make a fine installment for the team, complementing Hernandez and Iniesta in the middle and that he himself will score more goals with 23 year-old there.

If Arsenal finally surrenders Fabregas to the Spanish giants it could spell attacking disaster for the start of the 2010/2011 season, with 27 year-old Brazilian born-Croatian international Eduardo quitting Arsenal for Ukrainian giants Shakhtar Donetsk on a four-year deal for £6 million. This tripled with the fact that Robin van Persie will miss out on the first weeks of the season with an ankle injury he sustained in a pre-World Cup friendly against Italy.

Arsene Wenger is now interested in £10 million German defender Per Mertesacker considering the fact he needs reinforcements for William Gallas and Mikael Silvestre. Also, negotiations for Everton defender Phil Jagielka fell out after a £15 million bid was rejected by the Toffees last week.



Eduardo: Moves to Russia.

fees last week.

At Anfield some loose ends have finally been tied up, with a couple of players signing on the dotted line this week after much ongoing speculation. Ex-Standard Liege striker, Milan Jovanovic has officially signed for Liverpool this week on a free transfer after being made a free agent by the Belgian giants.

Also, ex-Chelsea midfielder Joe Cole has completed a four-year, £90,000 a week deal with Liverpool. It was reported that he was looked at by Manchester United and was a surprise pick-up for Liverpool, but the fact English teammate Steven Gerrard will stay at the Reds pushed him over to Liverpool in the end.

The midfield versatility of Cole will be a good replacement for 28 year-old Liverpool left-winger Albert Riera who joined Olympiacos this week.

He was presented to fans and the media who welcomed him to the Athens club. Reports claim the deal is worth £3.3 million and he has signed for four years. His younger brother Llorenç "Sito" Riera also plays for Panionios in Greece, making for an interesting



Adebayor: Heading to Italy?

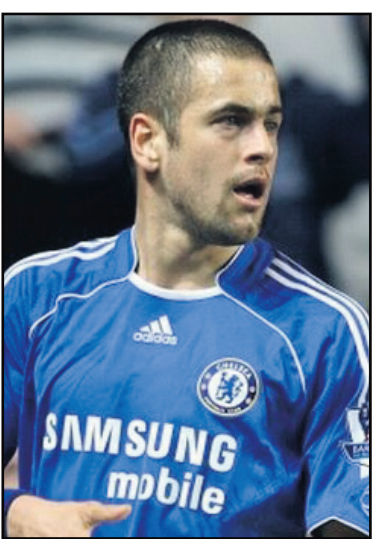
game

when the two teams meet this season. Liverpool midfielder Javier Mascherano has announced his interest in transferring to Inter Milan to return to Rafa Benitez. The Reds are willing to sell Mascherano to Inter Milan for £30 million, although Inter have fallen well short of this valuation, offering only £20 million.

Liverpool are also looking very likely to swipe up 26 year-old Klaas Jan Huntelaar on loan from AC Milan, but with Manchester United and City also showing interest in the Dutch striker, this may be difficult. If he was to move to Anfield it may be likely that Ryan Babel may move the other way, to the Rossoneri.

At Manchester City, the endless expedition for player signatures has continued this week with the signing of Serbian defender Aleksander Kolarov. The Lazio left-back passed a medical in Manchester this week and a £14.1 million five-year deal has been made.

Also at Eastlands, the Sky Blues have put in a final £24 million offer for Aston Villa midfielder James Milner,



Joe Cole: Signs with Liverpool

well short of Villa's £30 valuation. City have therefore left the ball in Villa's court, however Villa have claimed that they would sell the England international if City meet their valuation.

The three-way bidding war between the Manchester duo and Chelsea for Italian under 21 international Mario Balotelli has lost its intensity this week. The future for Balotelli at Inter Milan will be decided next week, and according to his agent that future looks to be at Manchester City, whose bank account appears to be bottomless.

The deal is not likely to be made this weekend, but on Monday or Tuesday as the clubs discuss terms. The Nerazzurri have placed a £30 price tag on the Italian born-Ghanaian, which has been met by a £23 million offer from City at the moment.

In the Serie A underachieving powerhouse Juventus are interested in Wolfsburg striker Edin Dzeko, who have offered €30 million, short of Wolfsburg's €40m price tag. Should such a deal not eventuate, Juventus will attempt to lure Adebayor on a loan deal for the season and pay him around €5.5m in wages. In return the Old Lady are willing to



Balotelli: On City's shopping list

offer Mohammed Sissoko as part of the deal for Adebayor their focus to Manchester City striker Emmanuel Adebayor

Some final rumours in Europe surround Chelsea, who appear to be making some late bids for Benfica and Brazilian pair Ramires and David Luiz.

Chelsea are have made a £20million bid for midfielder Ramires as Carlo Ancelotti searches for a replacement for Michael Ballack and Joe Cole. The second of the pair, David Luiz is also of speculation for a Chelsea transfer, in a Benfica double transfer. The Blues have offered £27 million for Luiz.

Chelsea are also keen to sign Brazilian teenage striker Neymar for £25 million from Santos, making him the world's most expensive teenager.

At Old Trafford, central defender Nemanja Vidic has agreed a new long-term deal with the Red Devils. The 28 year-old is on holiday but will sign the papers on his return to Old Trafford. It was rumoured he was leaving the 18-time English Premier League champions but will stay on for a few more seasons.

Pim and Purge

By Con Stamocostas

After two International tournaments were the Olyroos and Soccerroos failed to get out of the group stage at the Olympics and at the World Cup it's time to Purge Australian football of this safety first nonsense that has infected Australian football.

While the Olympics debacle has long been forgotten the World Cup campaign is still fresh in the mind. On both of these occasions the men in charge Graham Arnold and Pim Verbeek both got the same tattoo. In show of fraternity the words “Erring on the side of caution” can be seen on both their upper arms.

It can be seen in the players they chose in their squads, it can be seen in their tactics on the field, it can be seen in their fashion sense, the way they speak and finally the way they walk. And the walk away from the National team of both men can only embolden football to take that caution and throw it to the wind

Pim Verbeek's Soccerroos coaching story can be easily written with his first and last game that he coached..

His first game the Soccerroos was against Qatar. Pim played a 4 4 2 with a diamond midfield. In attack we had Scott Mc Donald, Josh Kennedy, Mark Bresciano and Tim Cahill as our main

attacking weapons. Never again would we see that formation again. It was not till the last game against Serbia with the score 0-0 that Pim through caution to the wind. The beginning and the end were positive, aggressive and undeniably Australian. While the middle had a gooey runny centre that Mat Preston from Masterchef (you gotta know it to mock it) would call his coaching style: bland, flavourless, lacking in texture and born from a lack of technique.

After the 2006 World Cup exploits the Soccerroos got cautious. Guss Hiddink by nature was a risk taker. Verbeek and Arnold were not.

The memory of the Olympics still burns me. Of course I should let it go but I have Greek heritage and besides food I love holding grudges even more. You can see it in the bulge in my back and the weird expression in my face when it's set to neutral.

I bring up the Olympics because Nathan Burns is coming to Australia with his AEK Athens team to play in this week's Sydney Festival of football. No player has suffered more from this cautions Australia than Nathan Burns. The next big thing in Australian football was left out of the Olympics squad because Graham Arnold though that the kid born in the NSW town of Orange could not run in the heat. Ahhh..... that cautions



Woulda, shoulda, coulda, but didn't: Time or tide waits for no man, so take heed of the moment for it shall never pass again. And next time, just have a go ya mugs!!

coaching kicking in again, even the excuses were cautious. It would be very intriguing to see how Nathan has developed in Europe since he left Adelaide United in 2008.

So who will be the next man in the Soccerroos hot seat? I don't care as long

as the balance swings away from the dull pragmatic tactics that hid the best qualities that Australian sport has to offer. Having an Aussie go!!!

(The term UN-Australian was hoping to be used in this article but due to the

rampant over use of the term during and after the World Cup it has taken a break due to the National Election being announced. It hopes it can be seen and heard during the Asian Cup regardless of the nationality of the coach)

Kalac farewells his beloved Sydney United

By Michael Chammas

In a fairytale finish to his illustrious career, Zeljko Kalac put on the gloves for one last time last Sunday at the ground where it all began.

The Soccerroos legend, who bid farewell to the United faithful in his last game at Sydney United Sports Centre, showed glimpses of the form from his heyday in Sydney United's 2-0 loss to the Newcastle Jets.

Australian football icons Craig Moore, Ante Milicic, Mark Rudan and Tony Popovic all put on the famous red jersey to send "Spider" out in style in front of a 3000 strong crowd at Edensor Park.

The two metre giant said he was overwhelmed by the turnout and was honoured to end his football career in front of his friends and family.

"This is where it all started, so to come back and finish here is fantastic," he said.

"It was great to see so many people back at this fantastic stadium.

"I couldn't have asked for a better day to go out."

When the game finally began, it didn't take long for the main attraction to leave his imprint on the game, denying Labinot Haliti from close range with a brilliant save low to his left.

But there was very little the United legend could do when a beautifully weighted pass from Adam D'Apuzzo found a charging Jeremy Brockie.

The No.14 did well to get behind the Reds defence, laying the ball back to an unmarked Ali Abbas who slotted home from the far post.

The Jets were making inroads on their opponents and were creating several opportunities up front.

Ben Kantarovski turned several defenders on his road to setting up Michael Bridges,



Full circle: Zeljko Kalac takes the field in Sydney United colours for one last time along with Tony Popovic, Craig Moore, Ante Milicic and Mark Rudan. PHOTO: Courtesy FNSW/CARLOS FURTADO

but despite being one-on-one with the Englishman, Kalac again proved difficult to crack.

But the veteran keeper soon made his first blunder of the afternoon, misreading a long ball from Adam D'Apuzzo, allowing Jeremy Brockie to run behind him and head home the Jets' second of the match.

Craig Moore and Mark Rudan made an early exit from the match, earning a heroes send off when they left the field moments before half time.

The Jets made several changes for the second period, allowing the likes of Sasho

Petrovski and Jobe Wheelhouse to make their way on to United Sports Centre for the first time.

Two of the three remaining United legends, Ante Milicic and Tony Popovic, both called it a night just after half time. It took more than an hour, but United finally made Jets keeper Ben Kennedy work.

A curling shot from Michael Cindric looked destined to reduce the deficit to one, but Kennedy's diving save to his left kept United at bay.

Despite pleasing the crowd with several saves, the biggest cheer of the night came

when Kalac departed his beloved field for the last time, receiving a standing ovation as he farewelled the crowd in the 73' minute.

Luka Glavas was given a short stint in the second half and could have opened the account, but Kennedy was again called into the action and thwarted Glavas' long range effort.

While the Jets were impressive in their two-goal, the day belonged to Kalac.

The 37-year-old admitted he was sore after the match, and said his decision to retire came at the right time.

Match Stats
Sydney United 0 Newcastle Jets 2 (Ali Abbas, Jeremy Brockie)
Venue: Sydney United Sports Centre, Edensor Park Sunday, July 18, 2010 Crowd: Approx 3000.
Sydney United: 1.Zeljko Kalac, 5.Damon Collina, 3.Craig Moore, 4.Tony Popovic, 21.Mark Rudan, 8.Shane Lyons, 7.Ivo Bosnar, 2.Mitchel Thompson, 39.Kyle Ewart, 10.Ante Milicic, 16.Elsid Barkhousir
Substitutes: Petar Markovic, Luka Glavas, Mitchell Spears, Peter Zorbas, Tommy Cirjak, Sean Mitchell, Michael Cindric, Joe Vrkic, Ryan Norval, Steven Veleski Yellow Cards: Nil Red Cards: Nil
Newcastle Jets: 1.Ben Kennedy, 21.Brodie Mooy, 3.Adam D'Apuzzo, 4.Nikolai Topor-Stanley, 5.Ljubo Milicevic, 7.Kasey Wehrman, 6.Ben Kantarovski, 8.Michael Bridges, 16.Jeremy Brockie, 14.Labinot Haliti, 19.Ali Abbas
Substitutes: 2.Taylor Regan, 10.Ruben Zadkovich, 12.Jobie Wheelhouse, 13.Sasho Petrovski, 17.Marcello Fiorentini, 18.Marko Jesic, 22.Kaz Patatta, 28.Mario Simic, 30.Paul Henderson Yellow Cards: Nil Red Cards: Nil



Half-Time Heroes

www.halftimeheroes.com.au

...anything can happen at half time

Shark Tales: The junior fees that ate Australian soccer’s future

By Phil Gerald

The stands of Marconi’s stadium were an inspired choice of venue for SBS’s *Insight* program’s recent excursion into grassroots soccer. If you hang around Marconi long enough everything wrong with Australian grassroots soccer will eventually parade itself before your eyes.

In the vanguard of this procession was the Project Kid, the precociously talented child with plenty of opinions about how and why Australian soccer is failing a player of his quality.

Project Kid’s dad, clearly a good listener, agreed wholeheartedly with the boy. After all, European football is played in Europe and Australia is not Europe, and that is a big problem for Australian soccer as it loses all its talent overseas. Project Kid is therefore heading overseas, which he wouldn’t have to do if we were in Europe. So what is Australian soccer going to do about *that*? At least New South Wales has mandatory reporting, I thought to myself.

Project Kid’s problems were the cue to drag into the discussion the high performance coach, the technical director and the private academy operator who was happy to admit he also acts as a player agent. What have they got to say for themselves? Why are they forcing Project Kid overseas?

The ensuing discussion about the numerous initiatives Australian soccer has in the pipeline to address its shortcomings as a stairway to a professional heaven told us one very important thing about grassroots soccer’s health; we can’t even discuss grassroots soccer’s health without the game’s professional tail wagging the dog.

Still, their point was well made. Australian soccer, by the reckoning of those who should know best, is absolutely bloody hopeless at developing junior soccer talent for the purposes of a professional career; absolutely hopeless. You got that? *Absolutely hopeless.*

Eventually a question came about why soccer is so expensive for kids to play in Australia.

“To register a player to play at Marconi or a similar club,” the program presenter said, “it costs about \$1,500 a season. That sounds like a huge amount of money.” The camera swung to Marconi chairman, Vince Foti.

Foti is the acting Marconi chairman after his predecessor, former Fairfield mayor Tony Campolongo, stood down in the wake of media reports that the club was in financial difficulties. Soon after Campolongo’s departure, allegations came from within the club that club-appointed investigators had found—take a breath now—proceeds of a club raffle had been paid into the bank account of a former CEO whose son was the licensee of a hotel formerly owned by Mr Campolongo that had billed its cool-room renovations to Marconi. By Marconi’s own reckoning, it has been haemorrhaging money.

So what about Marconi’s junior fees then?

“Our current fees are \$1,500. However, there is other clubs that are charging quite substantially more than that.”

“So why is the cost so great?” the presenter asked. “What are they paying for?”

“Well, we have the – of course, the coaches, the infrastructure, the necessary trophies, end-of-season activities and so on and apart from that, there is no moneys to be paid for the season.”

If, as Mr Foti says, other soccer clubs are charging kids *substantially* more than Marconi, presumably those other clubs



Footing the bill: Parents seem to need deeper pockets each season in order to cover the cost of juniors playing soccer. But where's all the money going?

have even better coaches, trophies and infrastructure than Marconi, and maybe some cool-rooms too.

Next up was a parent who had been faced with a soft-core version of Sophie’s choice: Which son does the family invest in?

“Both my boys were playing soccer ... I just can’t afford to have both of them playing it ... club registration can be \$1800 ... if he does an academy, he does his West-field fees as well ... anywhere between \$3,500-\$5,000 a year just to play soccer in Australia.”

“Why isn’t it free?” the presenter wondered. And over we went to the CEO of Football Federation Australia, Ben Buckley in Johannesburg.

“Now, I don’t understand exactly what the costs that were referred to were made up of ...”

Let’s go through it again for Ben. That’s club football at \$1500 or \$1800 a season—plus academy fees, plus God knows what other costs that are heaped on juniors with potential by a system that is deemed by insiders to be absolutely hopeless at developing juniors with potential.

If it was the cola wars and Pepsi’s HQ was unaware that its retailers were adding a zero to Pepsi’s RRP, I would put my money on Coke.

“What I can say is that as we grow as a sport,” Buckley said somewhat optimistically for a bloke riding a dead horse, “and as we develop more income through corporate sponsorship, TV broadcasting rights, all the various elements that make up our income, ultimately over time we would see some of that funding flow down through the system so that the cost of participation reduced.”

Ultimately, over time; just you wait. When Australia gets up a professional soccer league that’s worth a couple of hundred million dollars in media rights annually, FFA will be in a good position to do something about club soccer being unaffordable. And in the meantime, kids growing up in Africa will have more opportunities to play soccer than kids in Australia.

It’s a fine plan isn’t it? Kids who cannot afford to play soccer in Australia now can go and play footy and rugby league and golf instead, all of which are much cheaper to play than soccer, but when they grow up, despite any lingering resentment about being barred from playing soccer on financial grounds when they were kids, FFA is counting on them becoming passionate soccer supporters who will pour lots of money into the game. Presumably they will have watched the World Cup

a few times and grown deeply attached to the A-League. No wonder they get in people on huge salaries to look after these things.

In 2008, former Socceroo Craig Foster weighed into the fees debate: “... the culture of greed still exists, and Lord help any parent whose child is persuaded to attend numerous camps, programs and costly overseas tours all in the name of ‘development’, with some parents forking out anywhere from \$10,000 to \$20,000 per year.”

Foster’s criticism drew a furious response from Football NSW at the time but little looks to have changed. A 2009 Football NSW investigation found inner-Sydney clubs were charging juniors up to \$1750 a season, up from around \$500 a few years earlier.

In 2010, Football NSW says the investigation is ongoing and it is “working with clubs to reach a resolution however a total review of football competitions in this state will be assessed with a detailed report coming out by the end of the year.” That is, don’t hold your breath until anything changes.

While Marconi is charging kids \$1500 and justifying itself on the grounds that other NSW clubs charge “significantly more”, down in Victoria the ex-NSL clubs are charging kids up to \$1000 a season for club soccer. Victorian clubs justify themselves by pointing to NSW clubs, who are much, much worse. That’s leadership for you.

The father of one 14 year-old player who represented Victoria last year says he paid \$900 to a club over winter, another \$500 to a regional representative club over summer, a \$300 fee when their son made the 26-player state squad and then a \$700 “train-on” fee, and a \$2500 coup de grace when his son made the final cut.

According to that father, as the costs mounted kids progressively dropped out and were replaced by less talented kids with the financial means to stay involved.

He says he knows of kids who are better players than his son or anyone else in the state squad but they are playing footy because their families can’t afford soccer: “The most talented juniors in Victoria probably don’t even play organised soccer. The club fees make sure of that.”

Is it Ben Buckley’s fault that Australian soccer has become so expensive for kids to play?

Buckley might be guilty of not having

his finger on the pulse but he is not the game’s heartbeat; that particular rhythm is pounded out by the soccer community itself, or more accurately, those who profess to lead it.

For junior soccer in Australia to have become so expensive has required the quiet complicity of literally thousands of soccer insiders whose skills, experience and wisdom obviously wouldn’t earn them a Euro in a mature soccer market—remember, Australian junior development, according to those responsible for it, is absolutely hopeless.

The upshot of a few thousand “passionate” soccer people taking “petrol money” out of the game is a landscape filled with soccer clubs that regularly demand from kids four, five and ten-fold what nearby footy and rugby league clubs are asking.

Multitudes of kids have flocked to the game in recent years and promptly bailed out again. Who could blame them when soccer clubs’ fees are often predicated on the notion that soccer is less a sport than a vocational pathway. Why, when they are no longer a realistic chance of ever playing soccer professionally, why would they bother wasting their time, energy and the family fortune on playing it in Australia? Why continue paying exorbitant fees to a trade school you will never graduate from?

The midgets who have flooded into the game in recent years are not just Australian soccer’s future, they also happens to be game’s present funding apparatus. Thus, it doesn’t take a lot of imagination to see where Australian soccer is going to find itself in a few years.

The state federations presently collect around \$20 million from junior players’ registration fees annually. But with some soccer clubs charging kids up to 40- and 50-fold the basic junior registration and insurance fee to pull on a jersey, clubs are collecting from those same juniors at least *a couple of hundred million dollars a year*, and almost certainly much more. There is not a lot to show for that money though. Junior soccer development in these parts is, as we have heard, absolutely hopeless; most kids never see a flat pitch let alone a coach who values player development ahead of their own win-loss ratio.

No wonder soccer club powerbrokers prefer to compare their clubs’ junior fees with other soccer clubs. Comparing them with other team-sports fees would inevitably lead to calls for an ATO investiga-

tion or maybe even a Royal Commission. Where does all that money go?

Senior teams’ entry fees, player payments, the state federations’ operation—shonky remunerated junior coaches, even shonkier academy profiteers and maybe even the alleged cool-room renovations in a country pub; nearly all of those can be traced back to the pockets of juniors’ parents.

Having adopted a business model that looks for all the world like a pyramid-selling scheme with the bottom rung footing most of the bills, it is just a matter of time before the maths kick in and the junior participation numbers begin to contract. It won’t be pretty, and particularly so if the clubs and the sharks surrounding them respond true-to-form to the football recession and try to maintain their incomes by jacking up their fees even higher. Then we can just nail the lid on.

How do you kill a goose that lays golden eggs?

Catch a cab and ask the driver, he will be a former tennis coach. He will have worked for a few suburban clubs, had an academy on the side and been a pretty big wheel in the junior development pathway back in the days after junior tennis turned pro and before it promptly collapsed. The driver will be able to tell you exactly what happens to a game when it forgets it is a sport and comes to believe it is a branch of the sports-biz industry.

A lot of cab drivers who jumped on the soccer bandwagon in recent years and re-badged themselves as “soccer professionals” will soon be back where they belong working a two-way and meter; boom and bust—that’s how it goes. And Australian soccer will be back at the drawing board trying to think up a way to establish soccer here as the mass participation sport it needs to be before it can entertain infantile fantasies about having to reap massive media rights deals *before* it can make the game affordable to kids.

Soccer clubs will reap what they sew. If they don’t give enough of a stuff about the community they operate in to give that community’s kids a fair go at playing soccer, they can’t expect a community to identify with and support their soccer club.

As our financially voracious soccer clubs and coaches will tell you, they’re terrific clubs and coaches and they really know their stuff about junior development which is why they charge like wounded bulls. It is not their fault that Australian domestic soccer is not very good—we just haven’t got the cattle.

And whose fault is it that the cattle are choosing to play other sports?

All moral and community considerations to one side—which is where many soccer clubs prefer them—it is incredibly self-defeating for soccer to be unaffordable for any kid who wants to play. Spiralling entry-level costs over the last seven or eight years have already saddled Australian soccer with a shallower talent pool in the future.

For Australian soccer to get out of this one intact would require a seismic cultural shift in the moral codes of literally thousands of insiders—they know who they are— whose bank accounts have grown a little bit healthier in recent years due to their soccer connections. They can do what it takes to make soccer the mass participation sport it needs to be to survive in Australia, or they can continue taking “petrol money” and surf the soccer boom all the way to the reef.



KRNCEVIC'S CRUNCHLINES

With Eddie Krncevic

Australian soccer legend, Eddie Krncevic represented the Socceroos 35 times and scored 17 goals. He played professionally in Europe for Dimano Zagreb (Croatia), MSV Duisberg (Germany), Mulhouse (France) and Anderlecht, FC Liege, Aalst and Charleroi in Belgium.

7 Ways to Improve a Premier League Club

Greetings football fans and welcome to another dose of Krncevic's Crunchlines.

This week, I've got a monster for you.

I'm going to air some of my thoughts and views on how I believe we can improve Premier League clubs.

I would like to stress that before I begin, this is not an attack nor is it an indictment on the army of people who put in tireless amounts of hours, more often in a voluntary capacity, to try and sustain the survival of existing clubs.

We all know how much effort goes on behind the scenes to run a club, but my column this week is basically to highlight some ideas and provide some food for thought which I think might actually assist clubs to work smarter and not harder.

1.Reduce the playing wage bill

What price success? Considering the VPL prize money for the winner is \$30,000, \$15,000(2nd place), \$8,000 (3rd), \$4,000 (4th) and \$3,000 (5th), is it really worth it? Is the prize money proportional to the match payments?

Do your sums. Conservatively, if players receive an average of \$500 a game, does that mean the club needs approximately \$6000 a week just for the first team to take the field?

That's not including coaching staff and overheads. With 22 rounds in the season, does that mean it costs a club, conservatively speaking once again, approximately \$132,000 to service the team? So how does winning \$30,000 warrant the expenditure??? Relying on 11 home games and a smattering of sponsorship to finance the club means that clubs are walking a fine financial line.

I say do away with such inflated match payments, and rather pour the savings back into improving the facilities of the club.

Instead of the money walking out the door after 90 minutes, imagine how many things the money could be better spent on around the club.

A fresh lick of paint; better equipment for the players; fix and improve the presentation of the facilities; the list can go on and on.

By improving the comfort of the spectators and visitors alike; people who bring actual custom to the ground which contributes monetarily to the survival of clubs; it would entice and encourage punters to repeat their custom each time they return to the club - be it spectators, supporters, parents and players.

In all due respect to our current crop of clubs, but some of our venues look like they've just walked off the set from a Mad Max movie.

We all know the VPL is not the EPL, so match payments are not a feasible long term investment and cannot be justified at their current level.

The prize money on offer doesn't warrant the current market rate for a VPL match payment and it is actually crippling the clubs who try and keep up with each other, whilst the club deteriorates in other areas.

Instead, the money could be best utilised elsewhere for long term projects.

For it to work, clubs would need to be transparent to each other and sign a heads of agreement which abides them to what is effectively a salary cap.

If clubs were true and faithful to the long term objectives it would create a larger cash flow for which the funds should be better utilised for purposes to improve the club.

This would also release the pressure of continuously seeking sponsorship or the financial assistance from sole business people that are associated with the club, and people who are forever asked to dip into their own pockets.

The clubs need to work together to implement the strategy and regain the bargaining power.

Every club has to play within the rules and be genuinely committed if successful steps

were to be made to achieve the bigger picture.

The players will obviously not be fans of this concept, but it's a case of one step backwards, to go two steps forwards. Greater rewards will be reaped further down the track if clubs had the guts to take this action now.

2.Create a Football Day

This might be a bit difficult to implement, depending on ground availability and the numbers of registered juniors at any one club, but in theory this essentially is a good idea.

Mike Lilikakis aka Tsigan's Tsigar touched on this matter in one of his columns some time ago, but it really needs to be considered seriously.

Why don't clubs have all their juniors play at home on the same day as their seniors?

Have the whole club playing at home on the same day. Start the youngest juniors games at 9am and work your way through the ranks until it climaxes with the main game of the day - the seniors playing at 3pm.

With everyone unified at the club on the same day it creates a buzz on match day, a sense of familiarity and belonging, will probably add more on the gate, and not to mention the saving of energy and effort.

The canteen and bar could do a roaring trade due to the increase of foot traffic, and orders for supplies could be streamlined to one big order, saving double handling of hot dog rolls, drinks and the like.

Make a real day of it. Create an event. Get a Jumping Castle and have face painting for the kids. Have the seniors come and watch the juniors. Perhaps even have them award a man of the match at the end of their game.

Alternatively, why aren't juniors involved as mascots, ball boys etc etc for the senior game. It's about getting everyone involved and creating a real buzz around the ground on match day. This will help the kids to recognise the players and be familiar with who is playing in the team.

Clubs need to create identities and role models with which juniors players from the same club can identify with. This in turn gives the juniors the impetus to want to emulate their heroes and strive to represent the club and play in the first team.

3.Develop strong community links

Another one that would be difficult to execute given the part-time aspect of players and volunteer associated with clubs, but essentially the clubs have to be seen and create a real presence within the community.

Organise soccer clinics at local schools within the club's vicinity. Even if the seniors aren't available to attend and represent the club, then rotate the attendees between reserve players and youth team or under 18 team members.

It is an integral part of building relationships and recognition with the community. Even provide free match or discounted tickets at appropriate opportunities.

You might feel like you're throwing money away at first, but it is an investment in the future and the custom will be returned through purchases of food and drink in the social club.

In a sense, it is the McDonald's theory. Give away a voucher for free French Fries, and the customer will return to by a Big Mac and a drink.

If kids are granted free entry, they will bring a parent, who will hopefully bring a friend. Once again, it will help bolster the gate attendance and create a better match day atmosphere.

4.Build it they will come

Nothing wrong with sprucing the club up with little touches of individual characteristics that adds to the aesthetics of the ground.

In recent times, clubs such as Heidelberg United and Melbourne Knights painted the steps on their grandstand. A simple and great effect with a splash of paint and some elbow



Max leads out a mascot at a recent VPL game....

grease, and with the crowds not what they used to be, at least the colour gives the place a lift and brightens up the stretch of grey concrete.

Green Gully also showed the right initiative by installing green and white screens behind each of the goals.

Again, it fills up the space and brings colour to the arena. More of those and one could create a great enclosure that is intimate to watching soccer, and the crowds wouldn't look so sparse.

Richmond Eagles has that huge wire fence that stops the ball going into the freeway. Boo knows all about it, but what if they replicated Gully's idea and converted that huge stretch of wire into a pro Richmond banner? Have it done in the club's colours featuring the club's logo with a message blazoned across it. Something like, "This Is Richmond Eagles FC".

The intention is to improve the facilities as best one can. Sure, the grounds are not Old Trafford or the Nou Camp, but there's no reason why clubs can't organise 'working bees' involving everyone at the club and making a day of it. Maybe even set the 'working bees' on match day to maximise participation.

The better the place looks, the more pride it shows, which in turn will be appreciated and enjoyed by club members and visitors alike. Try and give parents of juniors the option to come and comfortably socialise inside the club, instead of choosing to stay in the car and knit or read while their son or daughter is out on the park training.

Basically, clubs need to create an environment that is unique to the football culture as well as being inviting for current and future members.

Undeniably, the upkeep of grounds is a relentless task, especially when the lifeblood of the clubs, the volunteers, ultimately end up doing most if not all of the work.

But, the appearance of the ground is an integral part of how the club is portrayed on match day and the rest of the week.

As Bill Shankly once said of Anfield, 'the place is a sacred place, a shrine really'. Whether its Anfield or Paisley Park, the same principles should be applied here in Australia.

5.Clean up the terraces

The presence of foul language and antisocial behaviour should not be tolerated at games.

The feral behaviour displayed by some sections of the crowd is proving to be a cancer to the game and is off-putting to many spectators and parents and children, who just want to watch and enjoy the game.

The anti-social behaviour only serves to please the selfish minority.

Cheering, chanting, singing, appealing; these are all elements of the game that gives it much of its colour and atmosphere, but we have to keep the passion and lose the lan-

guage.

Foul, abusive and racist language should not be tolerated under any circumstances.

6.Align match days and kick-offs

All VPL games should be played at a set regular time each weekend. Reverting back to a uniformed 3pm KO on a Saturday would be the most ideal scenario.

This may seem old fashion, but stretching the matches from Friday through to Monday takes away the essence of the competition and the anticipation of the result.

The sporadic relaying of information to news services is also stuttered, and not to mention annoying for any fan to follow.

Whilst the idea is to make the games more accessible for the crowds, it seems that it's the same people who are drifting from one game to another and keeping the crowd numbers afloat.

We must refer back to the point of creating a Football Day at clubs which expands the appeal, and the timing of the senior match, whereby it is easily accessible for club members to watch, in order to maximise exposure.

Family life is too congested as it is, and the majority of support needs to derive from the grass-roots, which essentially is made up of families who are already involved with the club.

8.30pm kick-offs are not the most popular amongst players either, especially the Monday night football games.

Most of the players have early starts for work the following day and by the time they finish a match, shower and drive home, it can sometimes be well past midnight until their commitments are finished.

Also, one of the most critical factors that is frequently failed to be considered for the late Sunday or Monday games, is the convenience of the match actually being covered in the media.

The game in general struggles to gain space in the mainstream press or local community newspapers, with some agencies forced to run VPL match reports a whole week later due to KO times being the wrong side of the deadline.

The Leader, for instance, has a deadline for Sunday afternoon but would happily include the match reports and results from the weekend's round of action if the games were played at a time that would meet their deadlines.

Why then is this not a factor taken on board for consideration when determining KO times?

If VPL games were played on a Saturday afternoon and utilised the exposure it could gain from the Leader Group of newspapers, this would reiterate a club's association with their respective community and automatically broaden its reach of exposure in high volume media.

It is almost as if the clubs are not doing

themselves the favour and tapping into the avenues at their disposal.

Goal! Weekly is another fine example whereby the lines of communication are non-existent. GW is dedicated to comprehensively covering the entire Victorian Premier League, and with a readership bigger than what most clubs could muster in a week, it is with much surprise that the publication has never been consulted or approached by any of the clubs or the FFV for that matter, with a view to working together to utilise the media vehicle and consider the options that would be best suitable for all concerned.

The late kick-off games don't seem to be working and they struggle to pull the anticipated crowds, especially on cold winter nights.

Keep the games succinct and in daylight. It will also keep the costs down on floodlight bills, and to take it to the extreme, even save on greenhouse omissions.

The learning of final scores at a set time each weekend is part of the magic of football which has been lost over time due to the fiddling of fixtures.

7.Utilise the social club to its potential

The social club should be the hub for any club, and for most it certainly is. But, more can be done to involve outsiders. Community bingo nights, movie nights, showing important football matches live on a big screen; events have to be created or tapped into.

Once again, it's easier said than done, but the clubs need to be forthcoming in thinking outside the box.

Bentleigh Greens hosts bingo days for a Senior's group most Mondays, and I'm sure that most of the other clubs have similar bookings or events in place.

Many clubs have tried to generate extra revenue by showing International matches or Cup finals on the big screen at the social club, but whilst some are successful, the time zone can sometimes not be ideal for some overseas KO times and often nigh on the impossible to accommodate due to due liquor licensing laws.

The nature of the exercise is to operate the venue like big arenas do. Why rely on a home football match every two weeks to keep the venue ticking over?

The big arenas are used for multi purposes, and therefore can be hired out for concerts and other events in order to generate revenue on the days when there are no football activities.

I realise that some of my suggestions may be interpreted as unrealistic or controversial, but I believe now is as good as time as any for Premier League clubs to seriously re-evaluate the direction of how they want to exist, and be prepared to make the hard decisions that are long overdue in order to redefine their role in the current football landscape.

We all know that the formation of the A-league essentially killed off a number of avenues of revenue that previously existed to Premier league clubs. But, if clubs were clever enough then they could adjust accordingly to operate within the parameters of business now set before them, and display initiative to overhaul and maximise their assets instead of living in a vicious cycle of hand to mouth.

Premier League clubs, and even State league clubs, still have a very important role to play in the pathway for football in this country. Not every player will be able to play in the A-league, so therefore players that are still of a decent playing standard have to go somewhere to ply their trade.

We have to create an environment that is paramount to being a genuine stepping stone which caters for players to still be able to have the chance to make the transition from amateur to professional status.

There is a future for football clubs at this level. We just have to be brave to lay the foundations that are more akin to long term prosperity rather than short term.

Lions & Athena roar to Cup Final

By Jacob Kagi

Stirling Lions' tremendous season continued with a 4-0 thumping of Swan United to move into the State League Cup Final.

It was a heated game with Stirling coach Paul Lincoln facing the side he left controversially earlier in the season, but the contrasting form of the two sides since that move was obvious.

Lincoln has transformed the Lions from finalists candidates to title favourites, with it sitting top of the table, in just a few weeks, while Swan still faces a massive challenge to avoid relegation, with it just two points above the drop zone.

Stirling scored all of its goals in the first half in a dominant display, with it never really challenged by Swan as it dominated in every aspect.

The Lions went ahead with an own goal in the 22nd minute, with Scott Muirhead putting in an excellent cross, which was too much for Cory Hugo to deal with, as the United goalkeeper saw fumbled the ball over the line.

Tom Ingram doubled Stirling's advantage just minutes later with a fierce shot that smashed into the top corner.

Mario Marcinko continued his good form as he headed in his side's third goal in the 28th minute, his 16th goal of the season.

In the 38th minute, Muirhead scored with a tremendous effort from a free-kick, allowing the Lions to cruise through the rest of the match.

Athena hit Armadale for six

Report by Chris Correia

Cup holders Floreat Athena have stormed into the 2011 State League Cup Final with a 6-0 demolition of Armadale at E&D Litis Stadium.

A blistering first-half performance from Ante Kovacevic's men saw them lead the Reds 5-0 at the break to shatter Armadale's hopes of reaching the final after their Reserves reached the milestone with a thrilling penalty shootout win over Sorrento.

Daniel Niederberger admirably led the way for Athena with a double, while Western Australia duo Branimir Mikulic and Johny Mirco also found the back of the net, along with Jovo Pavlovic and Mo Atak.

Mikulic got the ball rolling in just the fourth minute of the match, after a great cross from Niederberger on the left let the WA winger tap in to an empty net.

Armadale immediately tried to respond through James Robinson, but the State striker was denied from a strong Alex Dunn save.

Mo Atak then brought the game to life with a long-range effort which curled low into the bottom-right corner of the net with Sharrock seeming to get a hand on it.

The goalkeeper's attempt wasn't enough as



Mario Marcinko in on goal for the Lions' third. PHOTO: PETER SIMCOX

the former Armadale player's shot whistled into the net to give Floreat a 2-0 lead on 15 minutes.

Jovo Pavlovic was the next player to get on the scoresheet, as his unmarked header from a corner skimmed the bottom of the crossbar and over the goal line to make it 3-0.

It was a very different Armadale side from the one that defeated Athena 2-0 last Saturday and then backed it up with a strong showing against Perth Glory in Sunday's friendly.

Mikulic attempted an audacious turning volley with his back to goal as his side was in cruise control, but WA teammate Sharrock was alert to the danger and blocked the shot well. Sharrock then undid his good work with an embarrassing blunder when his attempted clearance under no pressure was an air swing that saw the ball roll past the 'keeper and inches past the goal for a corner.

Floreat continued to press and were rewarded when Niederberger scored just before half time to make it 4-0 and mirror the performance of Stirling Lions in yesterday's Semi Final against Swan United.

There was still more to come from Athena when the Armadale defence hesitated to clear the ball inside Floreat's 18-yard box and Mirco was on hand to pickpocket the loose ball and slot past Sharrock to make it an emphatic 5-0 score line at half time.

A deflated Armadale could do little to stop anymore embarrassment in the second half and it didn't get much better for Brad Hassell's men when Mirco tried to add a sixth early after the restart.

The match then got ugly for another reason, Dunn came out to punch clear a dangerous ball, but the Floreat goalkeeper instead collected Armadale striker Tom Robinson in the face.

It left the Reds star dazed and bloodied, with play stopped for several minutes and an animated brother James then confronted the Athena players.

No cards were issued from the incident, despite both teams becoming physical when play was halted.

However, it didn't take long for a red card to be issued.

Armadale's Andy Bowyer was given his marching orders by referee Mathew Cheeseman in the 71st minute after receiving two yellow cards in three minutes.

He last challenge was a poor tackle on Atak as he was in on goal and Cheeseman did not hesitate in sending the defender off. Athena needed just two minutes to take advantage of the extra player and they made it 6-0 when Niederberger nailed home a left-foot volley at the near post.

The annihilation of Armadale sets up Floreat for a tilt at back-to-back titles, but fierce rivals and APB State Premier League leaders Stirling Lions stand in their way of retaining the State League Cup.

DIVISION ONE

By Jacob Kagi

Bunbury Forum Force maintained its spot at the top of the table with an 11-1 thumping of bottom side Queens Park.

Lee Stewart scored four times in the Force for the second half, while Paddy Quinn also secured a hat-trick.

Fellow promotion candidates Wanneroo City and Bayswater City both won, continuing the three-way logjam at the top of the table, with all sides on 37 points and only separated by goal difference.

Wanneroo beat Morley-Windmills 3-2 in controversial fashion, with a disputed penalty

NEXT ROUND	
Round 18	
Sat 31 Jul 3PM	Armadale v ECU Joondalup
Alfred Skeet Oval	
Sat 31 Jul 3PM	Swan United v Inglewood United
Swan Italian Club	
Sat 31 Jul 3PM	Western Knights v Balcatta
Nash Field	
Sat 31 Jul 3PM	Perth SC v Mandurah City
BGC Stadium - Dorrien Gardens	
Sat 31 Jul 3PM	Cockburn City v Sorrento
Dalmatinac Park	
Sun 1 Aug 3PM	Stirling Lions v Floreat Athena
Macedonia Park	

DIVISION ONE LADDER	
	P W D L F A GD Pts
1 Bunbury Forum Force	16 12 1 3 63 15 48 37
2 Bayswater City	16 12 1 3 56 21 35 37
3 Wanneroo City	16 12 1 3 39 18 21 37
4 Gosnells City	16 10 0 6 36 31 5 30
5 Dianella White Eagles	16 7 4 5 35 34 1 25
6 Forrestfield United	16 9 2 5 41 26 15 21
7 Canning City	16 5 5 6 29 33 -4 20
8 Morley-Windmills	16 5 4 7 26 34 -8 19
9 Fremantle SC	16 3 5 8 24 41 -17 14
10 Rockingham City	16 4 0 12 14 48 -34 12
11 Ashfield	16 3 1 12 33 49 -16 10
12 Queens Park	16 2 0 14 19 64 -45 6

in the last 10 minutes getting the northern suburbs side the victory.

Bayswater beat Gosnells City 4-2, rescuing what looked like a potential disaster with just nine minutes left.

Gosnells came from behind twice to tie the score, the second of those coming in the 81st minute, but former Premier League striker Okwi Diamondstar put Bayswater ahead after 84 minutes, before the sealer was scored two minutes later.

The battle for relegation is even more important this year than most, with there expected to be no promotion from the First Division next year under controversial reforms to be implemented by Football West.

Elsewhere Ashfield beat Fremantle Spirit 2-0 to ease relegation concerns, Canning City drew with Forrestfield United 2-2 and Dianella White Eagles beat Rockingham City 2-0.

WA LADDER	
	P W D L F A GD Pts
1 Stirling Lions	17 10 3 4 29 20 9 33
2 Western Knights	17 9 4 4 36 22 14 31
3 Perth SC	17 9 2 6 35 32 3 29
4 Floreat Athena	17 8 4 5 35 21 14 28
5 Sorrento	17 7 4 6 30 33 -3 25
6 ECU Joondalup	17 5 7 5 37 38 -1 22
7 Armadale	17 6 4 7 27 28 -1 22
8 Mandurah City	17 6 3 8 27 33 -6 21
9 Balcatta	17 6 2 9 29 36 -7 20
10 Swan United	17 4 6 7 21 27 -6 18
11 Inglewood United	17 5 3 9 22 34 -12 18
12 Cockburn City	17 4 4 9 26 30 -4 16

WA RESULTS	
FOOTBALL WEST STATE LEAGUE Cup – Semi Finals	
Results – Saturday 24 & Sunday 25 July 2010	
Saturday 24 July 2010	
First Team	
Stirling Lions 4 (OG 24, Ingram 27, Marcinko 31, Muirhead 42) Swan United 0.	
Reserves	
Perth SC 1 ECU Joondalup 1 (ECU won on penalties).	
Under 18's	
Perth SC 3 Bunbury Forum Force 1.	
Sunday 25 July 2010	
First Team	
Floreat Athena 6 (Mikulic 4, Atak 15, Pavlovic 19, Niederberger 42, 74, Mirco 45+2) Armadale 0.	
Reserves	
Sorrento 1 Armadale 1 (Armadale won on penalties).	
Under 18's	
Sorrento 1 Cockburn City 5.	
FOOTBALL WEST APB STATE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE	
Results – Saturday 24 July 2010	
First Team	
Wanneroo City 3	
Morley-Windmills 2;	
Queens Park 1 (Chikombe 25)	
Bunbury Forum Force 11 (Binnie 3, 55, Prosser 10, 67, Quinn 44, 51, 71, Stewart 70, 75, 83, 85);	
Gosnells City 2 (Francis 7, Pomfret 81)	
Bayswater City 4 (Murulanda 6, 65, Diamondstar 84, Andres 86);	
Ashfield 2 (OG 57, Montorosso 81)	
Fremantle Spirit 0;	
Canning City 2 (Onyuku 16, Murgia 86)	
Forrestfield United 2 (Anderson 23, Burns 60);	
Dianella White Eagles 2 (Bogunovic 20, 66, Jelen 91)	
Rockingham City 0.	
Reserves	
Wanneroo City 7 Morley-Windmills 3;	
Queens Park 1 Bunbury Forum Force 9;	
Gosnells City 2 Bayswater City 5; Ashfield 0 Fremantle Spirit 3; Canning City 2 Forrestfield United 2; Dianella White Eagles 9 Rockingham City 0.	
Under 18's	
Wanneroo City 2 Morley-Windmills 1;	
Gosnells City 3 Bayswater City 3; Canning City 0 Forrestfield United 3; Dianella White Eagles 3 Rockingham City 3.	

WA SQUAD TO TAKE ON GLORY ANNOUNCED

Western Australian State coach Peter Murphy has announced his 18-man squad to take on Perth Glory for the Call To Arms Cup presented by Veto Sports on Wednesday July 28.

The team was announced exclusively live on Heritage FM's Let's Talk Football program on Sunday night.

The match will be held at E&D Litis Stadium in Mount Hawthorn and broadcast live on 107.3 Heritage FM.

Call To Arms is a national Cancer Council campaign to raise awareness of cancer in men and is supported by a range of ambassadors including Socceroos star Tim Cahill.

The team is made up of APB State Premier League players from nine out of the 12 clubs in the competition and is subject to change depending on any injuries or suspensions in the lead up to the match.

Cockburn City, Floreat Athena and Mandurah City are the clubs with the largest selection of players with three coming from each.

Former Glory players Marc Anthony, Adrian Webster, Antonio Naglieri, Ryan Townsend, David Micevski and Adrian Caceres have all been picked to wear the black and gold of WA and will have a point to prove against their old side.

Coach Peter Murphy says he has picked the cream of the crop from the APB State Premier League to tackle the Glory.

"I've been to every club and I've watched every club play," he said.

"I think we've covered as many bases as we can possibly cover."

Murphy backed his selection of former Hyundai A-League star Caceres, despite playing just 30 minutes for Inglewood United in last weekend's come from behind draw inspired by the former Glory star.

"When you're playing against the Glory you want the players that can play at that level and he is obviously one of those."

The Call To Arms Cup presented by Veto Sports will kick off at 7pm.

The match will also will be broadcast on West TV.

Perth's new community channel will air a 30-minute highlights package of the match on Thursday July 29 at 9pm and repeat it on Sunday August 1 at 5.30pm.

WA SQUAD

Shane NUNES	Cockburn City
Marc ANTHONY	Cockburn City
Adrian WEBSTER	Cockburn City
Danny CAIN	Sorrento
Antonio NAGLIERI	Perth SC
Andreas OLIVEIRA	Perth SC
John MIGAS	Floreat Athena
John MIRCO	Floreat Athena
Branimir MIKULIC	Floreat Athena

Jason GAVIN	Stirling Lions
Shane ROBINSON	Stirling Lions
Andy BROWN	Mandurah City
Ryan TOWNSEND	Mandurah City
Phil STRAKER	Mandurah City
Cyril SHARROCK	Armadale
James ROBINSON	Armadale
David MICEVSKI	Western Knights
Adrian CACERES	Inglewood United

Match Details:
Western Australia v Perth Glory
Wednesday July 28
E&D Litis Stadium,
Mount Hawthorn
Kick Off: 7.00pm
Adults \$10,
Concessions/Pensioners\$5,
U15's Free

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Monday 26th July 2010

BONNYRIGG PREMIERS DESPITE SHOCK LOSS

By Mike Salter

Despite a surprise 2-1 defeat at the hands of lowly Sydney Olympic on Saturday night, the Bonnyrigg White Eagles were crowned Premiers thanks to the efforts of their eternal rivals Sydney United, who defeated second-placed Blacktown 2-1 away on Sunday. Details of the former encounter can be found below.

In Sunday's other games, APIA-Leichhardt assured themselves of a place in the finals with a 2-0 home win over Bankstown City. It has been a superb recovery by the Italian-backed club after a dismal start to the season, and they are still in with a chance of finishing in second place with a game remaining.

Marconi's late-season collapse continued; they lost 2-0 at Rockdale City, a result which leaves them sweating on the final week's results to be sure of a finals berth. Manly United ended Sutherland's slim chances of a finals place with a 2-1 win, ending last year's champions' interest in the competition.

In the basement battle, South Coast Wolves had their second big win in as many weeks, thumping the bottom-placed West Sydney Berries to the tune of 5-0. The Berries are practically certain to be relegated to the Winter Super League in 2011.

Sydney Olympic 2-1 Bonnyrigg White Eagles
In a major late-season upset, Sydney Olympic received some consolation for their miserable campaign by posting a 2-1 win over competition leaders Bonnyrigg. The result, however, was hardly indicative of the balance of play, and did not stop Bonnyrigg from deservedly gaining the 2010 Premiership.

From the outset, the visitors exerted most of the pressure, with the combination of Brad Boardman and Nathan Elasi up front causing the young Olympic defence considerable problems.

The hosts weathered the early onslaught, however, and took the lead against the run of play on the quarter-hour. A ball was clipped forward from midfield towards Olympic's Tod Bamber, who was baulked in the area after some confusion in the Bonnyrigg defence. A penalty was given, and Phil Makrys drove the spot-kick low to



Bonnyrigg White Eagles are the 2010 FNSW Minor Premiers despite losing 2-1 to Sydney Olympic. PHOTO: CARLOS FURTADO/FNSW

his right, beyond the outstretched arm of Ali Akbal.

Brian Brown's side continued to dictate the tempo of the game, and on 24 minutes Olympic keeper Zaim Zeneli did well to block a shot from Daniel Severino after being beaten to an aerial ball by Boardman. As the game approached the half-hour mark, Bonnyrigg's midfield was taking up permanent residence in the Olympic half, yet a couple of half-chances was all the visiting side could muster after squandering a number of final balls.

It was another soft penalty which brought Bonnyrigg back into the game, on 34 minutes. A long diagonal ball from the left was headed for Boardman, but the former Sutherland man had his legs clipped as he went up for the ball in the area. The second spot-kick of the game ensued, and although Severino slipped while taking the penalty, he managed to bury the ball into the top left-hand corner of the goal.

Sydney FC-bound winger David Gullo was not having the happiest of games for the visitors, and he failed to make the most of an excellent chance on 40 minutes when a right-wing cross from Boardman reached him on the far post. Boardman himself had a chance soon afterwards when Elasi broke down

the left and cut the ball back, but Boardman scuffed his first-time shot wide of goal.

The final two chances of the half fell to Olympic's top marksman Matthew Mayora. A long shot was held by Akbal a minute before the interval, and with the last kick of the half Mayora attempted an audacious volley from Makrys's right-wing cross; it flew over the bar.

Severino was given another chance to demonstrate his dead-ball prowess on 47 minutes when Zeneli foolishly handled outside the area, but Severino's left-footed rocket whistled over the crossbar. Three minutes later, Boardman shot from a narrow angle on the right, and the ball skidded tantalisingly across the goalmouth.

The visitors had all the play. Zeneli fumbled a cross from Chris Tadrosse, who had made a ram-paging run up from left-back, but Boardman could only bundle the rebound into the Olympic keeper's body. Boardman had an even better chance to get on the scoresheet just after the hour, when his glancing header from Elasi's cross drifted just over the top.

On 73 minutes it looked like the visitors had scored the goal which their aggressive play had merited, when Gullo headed Tadrosse's

cross into Zeneli and Boardman turned the rebound home. But the goal was ruled out controversially for an earlier foul.

And so it was that Olympic stole the points with a disarmingly simple goal on 78 minutes. A long clearance from the Olympic defence set Bamber in a race against Paul Cotte: the latter should have been the winner, but his back-header was very poorly placed, rebounding off Akbal's body into the path of the onrushing Bamber. Although the young Olympic frontman's first touch was an awkward one, taking him wide of goal, he did well to finish from a tight angle as goalkeeper and defender scurried back.

Bonnyrigg continued to rush forward, but with the veteran Angelo Petratos (father of recent Sydney FC recruit Dimitri) superbly defiant in defence for the hosts, Brian Brown's men were continually frustrated. Nikola Zonjic came on to add fresh impetus to the visitors' attack, and he created a chance for himself almost immediately, finding space for a rasping volley from 20 yards which was deflected just over the bar. On 88 minutes Gullo should have snatched a point for the leaders when a flowing move reached him on the right, some five yards from goal; he fired wide, and the game was lost.

NSW LADDER

	P	W	L	Pts
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	21	12	6	42
Blacktown City FC	21	11	4	37
Sydney United	21	10	6	36
APIA Leichhardt Tigers	21	11	3	36
Marconi Stallions	21	10	3	33
Rockdale City Suns	21	6	12	30
Sutherland Sharks	21	8	4	28
Bankstown City	21	7	5	26
Manly United FC	21	7	4	25
South Coast Wolves	21	6	4	22
Sydney Olympic	21	6	3	21
West Sydney Berries	21	2	6	12

NSW RESULTS

NSW PREMIER LEAGUE: ROUND 21: FIRST GRADE:

Sydney Olympic 2 (Phillip Makrys 15m pen
Tod Bamber 78m)
Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1 (Daniel Severino
35m pen).

Rockdale City Suns 2
(Adem Kir 67m Marino Musumeci 81m)
Marconi Stallions 0,

Manly United FC 2
(Robert Cattanch 12m David Dodd 59m)
Sutherland Sharks 1 (Benjamin Spuce 47m),

APIA Leichhardt Tigers 2 (Franco Parisi 17m
Nicola Rizzo 48m)
Bankstown City 0,

Blacktown City FC 1 (Joel Chianese 61m)
Sydney United 2 (Damon Collina 27m Luka
Glavas 66m),

South Coast Wolves 5 (Samet Kaynak 20m
Mark Picciolini 45m/80m Christopher Nathan-
iel 58m Tynan Diaz 88m)
West Sydney Berries 0.

GRADE 20: Sydney Olympic 2 Bonnyrigg
White Eagles 2, Rockdale City Suns 0
Marconi Stallions 1, Manly United FC 2
Sutherland Sharks 1, APIA Leichhardt Tigers
2 Bankstown City 1, Blacktown City FC 3
Sydney United 1, South Coast Wolves 4 West
Sydney Berries 1.

GRADE 18: Sydney Olympic 0 Bonnyrigg
White Eagles 1.

SUPER LEAGUE: ROUND 19: FIRST GRADE:
Parramatta Eagles 2 (M Clowes 3/84m) North-
ern Tigers 2 (S Park 60m T Spencer 75m),
Spirit FC 3 (A Peatey 26m T Simpson 65m
D Cunningham 90m pen) Granville Rage 1
(C Bottalico 59m), Fraser Park FC 0 Sydney
University 0, Central Coast Lightning 3 (K
Crum 33m N Byrn 54m N Woodcock 69m) St
George FC 2 (J Chavez 4m B Gibson 25m),
FC Bossy Liverpool 2 (K Atkinson 75m
Daniel Wilson 90m) Dulwich Hill 0, Macarthur
Rams 0 Mt Druitt Town Rangers 1 (E. Georges
33m pen).

GRADE 20: Parramatta Eagles 1 Northern
Tigers 4, Spirit FC 3 Granville Rage 1, Fraser
Park FC 2 Sydney University 2, Central Coast
Lightning 5 St George FC 2, FC Bossy Liver-
pool 0 Dulwich Hill 1, Macarthur Rams 2 Mt
Druitt Town Rangers 0.

DIVISION ONE: ROUND 19: FIRST GRADE:
Blacktown Spartans 1 (M Todd 1m) Bal-
main SC 0, Hills Brumbies 3 (D Savic 3m B
Mitrovich 68m T Pannowitz 87m pen) Mount-
ies Wanderers 1 (D Willoughby 6m), Inter
Lions 0 Camden Tigers 0, Hurstville ZFC 1
(V Zoric 74m) Gladesville Ryde Magic 2 (C
Robertson 3m, J Martinez 19m), UNSW 0
Schofield Scorpions 1 (T Harrington 39m),
Stanmore Hawks Fairfield City Lions Post-
poned.

NEXT ROUND

Round 22

3pm Sun 1/Aug B'rigg White Eagles v
West Syd Berries

Bonnyrigg Sports Club

3pm Sun 1/Aug Bankstown City v
Blacktown City

Jensen Park

3pm Sun 1/Aug APIA L'hardt Tigers v
Sth Coast Wolves

Leichhardt Oval

3pm Sun 1/Aug Marconi Stallions v
Syd Olympic

Marconi Stadium

3pm Sun 1/Aug S'land Sharks v
Rockdale City Suns

Seymour Shaw Park

3pm Sun 1/Aug Syd Utd v Manly Utd

Sydney Utd Sports Centre



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GOAL FEAST AT FOOTBALL FESTIVAL



AEK Athens players celebrate one of their five goals against Sydney FC. PHOTO: GEOFF JONES



Sydney FC captain Alex Brosque pulls one back for the home side from the penalty spot. PHOTO: GEOFF JONES



AEK Athens fans show their colours at the Sydney Football Stadium. PHOTO: GEOFF JONES

By Roy Hay

The Sydney Festival of Football kicked off in winter sunshine at the Football Stadium with a double header involving Sydney FC against AEK Athens and Blackburn Rovers taking on Rangers from Scotland.

A crowd of 14,153 attended the two games, but because some left and some arrived for the second match the atmosphere was lacking, except when the Rangers fans were in full voice.

Players found the going difficult at times, in part because the sprinklers came on before the first game creating some slippery patches in midfield.

Of the four teams taking part, AEK looked very slick in scoring five goals against Sydney, though at least three of these came from defensive mistakes.

Thanks to the curious scoring system employed for the tournament—designed to increase the tally of goals—it will lead the table with 8 points, three for the win and one each for its scores.

Even though Sydney went down by five-three, it collects 3 points, and is still in the hunt.

Rangers accounted for Blackburn Rovers by two goals to one after a performance which surprised the pessimistic Scottish press contingent who are de-

pressed by Rangers' financial position.

Rangers had to sell several of their players including top scorer Kris Boyd and teenage defender Danny Wilson and apart from the return of Andy Webster who was on loan to Dundee United last season, there have been no significant additions to the squad.

But they played an excellent, on the deck, passing game which resulted in an early goal from a cross by Steve Davis headed in by Maurice Edu.

Kenny Miller finished off a brilliant interchange between Kyle Lafferty and Steven Naismith with Lafferty's cut back finding the striker just before the interval.

Rangers got a penalty for a trip in 63 minutes but Miller hit the bar, then Blackburn got one two minutes later and David Dunn scored.

In the early game there was one of the howlers of the decade when the AEK keeper tried to round Alex Brosque on the edge of his goal area, but only presented the striker with his second goal.

He had earlier converted a penalty to give Sydney parity after Leonardo had put AEK in front.

Thereafter it was all AEK with goals coming at regular intervals to delight their small band of supporters.



AEK's Leonardo slots one past Sebastian Ryall. PHOTO: GEOFF JONES



Battle of Britain: Glasgow Rangers v Blackburn Rovers. PHOTO: GEOFF JONES

By Mike Salter

At the Sydney Football Stadium on Sunday, Sydney FC and AEK Athens opened the Sydney Festival of Football with a splendidly entertaining eight-goal feast. It was the Greek side who came out on top, putting together a number of delightful moves in the course of the game, and demonstrating the gulf in class between Australian and European club football.

The match did take some time to get into gear, and the only chance of note in the first fifteen minutes fell to the visitors, when former Greek international Nikos Liberopoulos tested Sydney FC's Ivan Necevski from distance. The two sides were feeling each other out, and neither was prepared to take too many risks in attack.

AEK began to dictate matters as the half wore on, and on 18 minutes a brisk one-two on the left flank sent AEK left-back Panagiotis Lagos through on goal, with Necevski doing well to hold onto his low volley. Some twelve minutes later, with AEK edging ever closer, Greek international Pantelis Kafes nodded a cross from the other fullback, Sanel Jahic, just wide of goal.

The breakthrough came only moments later. Receiving the ball on the left, Liberopoulos touched it off beautifully to Brazilian winger Leonardo Pereira, who ran on to curl the ball neatly around Necevski for AEK's opener.

The A-League champions, however, were back on level terms within only two minutes. A Scott Jamieson corner was needlessly handled by Kafes, and Sydney FC were awarded a penalty. Alex Brosque's reliable left foot thumped it down the middle, and it was 1-1.

The scores were not level for long. In the 37th minute, Pereira's left-wing corner was flicked on expertly by Kafes, and Argentinian striker Ismael Blanco snuck in front of Byun Sung-Hwan at the far post to apply a headed finish.

The teams went into the rooms at 2-1, despite a good attempt at goal from Shannon Cole five minutes from the interval. When Sydney FC emerged from the tunnel, it was with young Kofi Danning on the right instead of Brendan Gan, who had been a disappointment in the first period.

Sydney drew level again within three minutes of the restart, in comical fashion. AEK keeper Ioannis Arampatzis received a back-pass with Brosque closing in on him, and rather than try to clear the ball he foolishly attempted to dribble past Brosque on his line. A stumble, an outstretched right boot from the Sydney striker, and Sydney FC had their second goal.

Blanco split the Sydney defence with a clever ball through to Pereira three minutes later, but the Brazilian steered the ball wide. On 58 minutes AEK were somewhat lucky not to be reduced to ten men when a surging run on goal by Brosque was cynically blocked by Kostas Manolas. The AEK man received no more than a caution.

On the hour, AEK went ahead for the third time in the match. A dreadful giveaway in midfield by Hirofumi Moriyasu, in his first game as a contracted Sydney FC player, set an AEK attack in motion; Ignacio Scocco, another of AEK's Argentinian legion, advanced on the left and smartly played in Liberopoulos on the right. Leisuredly bringing the ball onto his left foot, the veteran produced a classy finish past Necevski.

To the delight of the home crowd, former A-League star Nathan Burns made his appearance for the Greek side on 62 minutes, and was into the action immediately. His header at goal from a right-wing cross on 63 minutes lacked power, but soon afterwards he timed his run in the centre perfectly to connect with a through-ball, but was incorrectly called offside.

Sydney FC too made changes, Rhyan Grant replacing the unfortunate Moriyasu and Senegalese triallist Ibrahim Thiam replacing Mark Bridge. AEK continued to produce the better football, however, and on 74 minutes they went further in front. Danning's careless touch let in Scocco, who swiftly rounded a stunned Cole and finished adroitly with his right foot.

Thiam had an excellent chance to open his Sydney FC account when big Swedish defender Daniel Majstorovic let him through on goal on the right, but his gentle prod at goal was cleared by Manolas. A minute later, it was five for the Greek club. Man-of-the-match Liberopoulos charged diagonally into the box and shot at goal; Necevski pushed the ball gently into the path of Kafes, whose lunging shot was touched, but not saved, by the Sydney FC keeper.

Grant showed plenty of intent in the final minutes, and created a third goal for Sydney FC with a minute to go. Finding room for a cross on the left, he picked out the head of Thiam on the far post, and this time the lanky man from Senegal made no mistake. Grant might have scored himself a minute later after turning his man in midfield and firing at goal from 25 yards, but the shot skidded wide.

A marvellous game of football, and a fine start to the event.

RANGERS EDGE OUT BLACKBURN
In the second match of the double-header, Scottish giants Rangers staved off a spirited second-half fightback from English Premier League club Blackburn Rovers to secure a 2-1 win.

Rangers scored twice in the opening period, USA international Maurice Edu heading home the opener from Steve Davis's free kick, and Kenny Miller doubling the lead just before half-time after a sumptuous right-wing move. Rangers' Algerian international Majid Bougherra gave away a penalty in the second half when he tripped Blackburn's Junior Hoilett in the area, and David Dunn making no mistake from the spot. That, however, was all the men from Lancashire could muster.



Former Socceroo and Rangers player, Craig Moore, asks if he should have brought his boots. PHOTO: GEOFF JONES



High fives for Rangers players after a 2-1 win over Blackburn Rovers. PHOTO: GEOFF JONES



Aye Ready! The Australian arm of the Rangers Army are in full voice. PHOTO: GEOFF JONES

EAGLES STITCH CUP FINAL BERTH IN JUST 45 MINUTES

By Nat Adamopoulos

Adelaide Blue Eagles went straight through to the Federation Cup Grand Final after giving the Premier League side Enfield City Falcons a 5-0 hiding at Adelaide City Park on Saturday.

It was a case of set yourself up well in the first half and cruise home in the second with coach Zoran Karadzic's lads, proving that there is still quite a big gap between the two leagues with their dominance in the first 45 minutes, despite the Falcons side having a number of players that were former MetroStars Super League players.

The Eagles were without in form striker Chad Bugeja who had succumbed to a late injury at the last training before the game. The Falcons started well, trying to emulate the great performance of the Cumberland Foxes in 2009 being a Premier League club to win the title and were providing some good strength at the back with Joe Costa, Charles Marwe, Mark Graham and Martinez. Meanwhile captain Dimi Parhas and Michael Margaritis were getting the supply from their midfield and creating opportunities up front.

There was not real surprise to the small crowd that they were worn down quickly by the pure slickness and quality ball possession of the Eagles, their opponents pinpoint passing and accurate ball placement a big difficulty to handle by the Falcons.

As the Eagles' percentage of time on the ball increased so did their chances at goal, until eventually success struck at the 21st minute by young gun Mitch Nicholson who was in the right place at the right time to get on the end of a ball parried out by Falcons keeper Peter Kourkoulis to blast in a rocket from 35metres out to put the Eagles in front.

Just 3 minutes later it was Eagles defender Dean Kenrick putting in the second for his side, who uncannily has found the back of the net of late. The proverbial flood gates opened up for the Azzurri, with young striker Kym Harris beating the Falcons defence and keeper in the 27th minute for number three.



Blue Eagles young gun Mitch Nicholson broke the ice with his great goal under the watchful eye of Adelaide United new coach Rini Coolen
PHOTO: ADAM BUTLER

Margaritas and Parhas were desperately looking to get some dignity back into the scoreline for the Falcons with the help of the Costa brothers Joe and James, ex MetroStars midfielder Jim Stavrides and 2009 State League Player of the Year Russell Waller but to no avail thanks to the solid midfield and defence of the Eagles.

Just to add insult to injury, Harris popped up to header in his second and and Eagles fourth and pocket rocket striker Fortunato Filletti slotted away one to make it 5-zip and game set and match for the Azzurri.

As the sides went in for the half time

break punters were left to ponder just how much of a blow out the score would be.

To their credit Falcons came out stronger in the second half and put up a great contest getting together some good possession and forward movement but were outclassed by the experience of the Eagles defence. Karadzic took his foot off the pedal and saved two of his prize steeds by substituting Kounavelis and Lagati for the youth of Nicholas Bucco and Mensur Delkic who both stood up and played a mature game for the rest of the match,

SUPER LEAGUE										
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts		
MetroStars	15	10	4	1	35	15	20	34		
Para Hills	15	7	5	3	21	18	3	26		
Adelaide Blue Eagles	15	7	4	4	34	21	13	25		
Campbelltown	15	7	4	4	26	20	6	25		
Adelaide City	15	7	2	6	21	24	-3	23		
Western Strikers	15	4	7	4	28	29	-1	19		
Adelaide Galaxy	15	3	7	5	17	21	-4	16		
Adelaide Cobras	15	5	1	9	22	34	-12	16		
Raiders	15	3	5	7	15	21	-6	14		
Cumberland Utd	15	1	3	11	17	33	-16	6		

NEXT ROUND										
Round 16										
Sat 31/07/2010										
Adelaide Blue Eagles vs MetroStars										
3pm Marden Sports Complex										
Adelaide Cobras vs Campbelltown										
3pm Weigall Oval										
Adelaide Galaxy vs Cumberland Utd										
3pm Con Makris Park										
Para Hills vs Adelaide City										
3pm The Paddocks										
Western Strikers vs Raiders										
3pm Carnegie Reserve										

PREMIER LEAGUE										
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts		
Modbury	15	11	1	3	42	20	22	34		
Croydon	15	9	3	3	28	16	12	30		
Adelaide Comets	15	8	1	6	28	25	3	25		
Enfield City	15	6	5	4	25	24	1	23		
Pirates	15	5	5	5	26	23	3	20		
Adelaide Olympic	15	4	5	6	23	23	0	17		
Adelaide Hills	15	5	1	9	26	30	-4	16		
Salisbury Utd	15	5	1	9	18	30	-12	16		
West Adelaide	15	5	1	9	15	36	-21	16		
White City Woodville	15	4	3	8	20	24	-4	15		

especially Bucco with some great work to get the ball forward. The Falcons defence stiffened up and stood strong to prevent their opposition adding to the score, thanks to some super efforts from Marwe, Graham, Martinez and Costa. Parhas had a few chances to get some credibility back in the match but the top keeping skills of DeLucia put a stop to that happening, the Eagles keeper pulling off some great saves. A late substitution by Falcons coach Peter Cristarella put fresh young legs on in Yamin Jamal who was making his mark on the match with some great tackles and runs for the ball, but was on the wrong end of fall which saw him drastically dislocate his elbow and effectively put an end to the game. The young lad fell inside the pitch and trainers were reluctant to move him due to the immense pain. So as the ambulance was called up, referee Dave Alberton made the decision to bring an end to the match with only a couple of minutes to go. The emphatic victory by the Eagles sends them straight into the Cup Final trying for a seventh Cup Trophy in their history.

The second Semi Final was played out on Sunday at the Mardens Sports Complex between league leaders and 2009 League Champions MetroStars and fourth placed Campbelltown City Red Devils. As expected, this match was always going to be a closely contested match with both clubs having won two cup titles in their history.

The first half was played out in a somewhat safe tactical manner, both sides using their backline to play out most of their possession, only moving forward when small gaps were present in the midfield and players were able to press the ball.

Young keeper for the MetroStars Michael Rende who has played second fiddle to Dan Godley for some years now, had his time between the sticks and did so admirably with some great saves made throughout the match. With striker Scotty Tunbridge out it was great to see the 'springing gazelle' James Yong Back in the side for MetroStars after having a stint in the US with his college studies.

SA RESULTS										
FEDERATION CUP										
Adelaide Blue Eagles 5 (K.Harris 2, F.Filletti, D.Kenrick, M.Nicholson)										
Enfield City 0 (HT 5-0)										
Best – Blue Eagles (M.Nicholson, Sa.Parissos, D.Kenrick)										
Enfield (D.Parhas, M.Graham, D.Martinez)										
Campbelltown City 0										
MetroStars 1 (M.Matricciani) (HT 0-0)										
Best – Campbelltown (T.Nelson, V.Parhas, J.Trimboli) MetroStars (T.Sarris, I.Karlovic, M.Matricciani)										
RESERVES CUP										
Adelaide Blue Eagles 2 (D.Scalamera, T.Majorana)										
Croydon 0 (HT 2-0)										
Best – Blue Eagles (A.Harris, I.Kamau, H.Walter)										
Croydon (D.Marino, C.Sloniec, A.Vettese)										
Salisbury United 3 (S.Spiby, A.Ducker, D.Burton) MetroStars 2 (A.Karastamatis, R.Callisto) (HT 2-0)										
Best – Salisbury (C.Brown, S.Spiby, A.Rowe) MetroStars (J.Polisena, D.Rechichi, E.King)										
UNDER 19 CUP										
Cumberland United 1 (T.O.G.)										
West Adelaide 4 (C.Vounasis, I.Jaric, M.Bouzas, G.Piliouras) (HT 1-1)										
Best – Cumberland (A.McInnes, W.Toms, C.Dry)										
West Adel (M.Bouzas, I.Jaric, C.Pappas)										
Adelaide City 1 (M.Mittiga)										
MetroStars 2 (S.Gardham, L.D'Arrigo) (HT 0-1)										
Bets – Adel City (B.Solano, L.May, M.Mittiga)										
MetroStars (L.D'Arrigo, E.Taban, A.Kalinovic)										

What could have been an early breakthrough by the league leaders ended in disaster, as speedster Steven Grelli was presented with a golden opportunity, opening goal directly in front only 10 metres out, instead spraying his shot way off target.

The first 45 minutes resembled a chess match, each movement seemingly clinical and being counteracted by the other side as if waiting for the other to make a serious blunder.

Veteran Red Devil Jason Trimboli had a couple of blasts at goal but Rende and the Stars staunch defenders took care of those quickly. Young Perri Mitris almost found his name on the score card for MetroStars just before the half time whistle when he curved in a great shot from a corner kick that only just glanced past the face of goal, catching Pogliacomini off guard.

The second half eventually did liveen up Trimboli with a shot at goal that missed its mark in the 68th minute. Yong was then substituted by Stars coach David Terminello in the 69th minute for Jackson Groves who has had a super season so far, but unable to put in his usual exciting performance in this game.

Red Devils coach Rocky Aloisi took tough defender Luca De Girolamo off in the 83rd after luckily escaping what could have been a second yellow card and put midfielder Stephen Piotto on to see if he could inject some venom in the match.

But as the game neared its completion and things were looking like going into extra time, it was Stars striker Michael Matricciani who came up with the match winner in the 91st minute, getting on the end of a great ball that totally split the defence of Campbelltown care of his Captain Ivan Karlovic, slotting the ball low and left past keeper Les Pogliacomini.

The desperate efforts of the Campbelltown lads was left too little too late as the final whistle was blown and MetroStars earned themselves a place in the Federation Cup Final to be held on Saturday 21st August at Hindmarsh Stadium the home of football.

CCSC v Metrostars: Michael Matricciani get the match winner for MetroStars
ADAM BUTLER

Title Race Still On As Late Winner Denies Fire

By Jarrod Ellis

The most anticipated match of Round 18 of the Hyundai QSL was without a doubt the encounter between Brisbane Strikers and Sunshine Coast FC at Perry Park on Saturday night.

Sunshine Coast have been moving ever closer to claiming the QSL league title in recent weeks and with only three rounds remaining Brisbane are the only side in the competition that can deny them.

Going into the match the Fire were faced with the knowledge that a draw or a win would see them clinch the title, a situation that unsurprisingly lead to a tense and at times heated encounter out on the pitch.

The Fire had the better of the opening quarter of an hour, with Tyson Holmes combining well with right-sided midfielder Yuta Gona in particular, and placing the home side's defence under early pressure.

The visitors went close to scoring in the fifth minute when Holmes delivered a free kick, high towards the Strikers' penalty spot. Josh Taylor jumped high to direct a powerful header at the Strikers' goal, and the ball would have gone just under the crossbar if not for an athletic leap from goalkeeper Seb Usai, who palmed the ball away.

The Strikers were taking their time to settle but were suddenly in the contest in the eighteenth minute when midfielder Matt Christensen opened up the Fire's defence with an excellent pass to Matt Thurtell. Taking the ball in his stride Thurtell raced away from his defender and into the Fire's penalty area. Thurtell's run brought Fire goalkeeper Antony Hall sprinting off his line, Hall then pulling off a fine save to slow Thurtell's shot just enough to allow Alex Henderson to clear the ball away just before it crossed the line.

From then on the Strikers began to wrest control of the midfield and created most of the scoring chances in the remainder of the half, only to waste them with shots and headers that failed to draw a save out of Hall.

Christensen then missed a chance of his own when, having received a low cross from Myles Carseldine inside the Fire's penalty area, the midfielder shimmied to his right to beat a defender and earn himself the time to place his shot. But Christensen's shot failed to even test Hall, sailing half a metre over the crossbar from about ten metres.

As Hall's goal continued to live a charmed life Sean Burke became the next player to miss the target from close range. Burke go himself into position, sprinting on to an incisive pass from the centre circle and then beating a defender to race towards the Fire's six-yard box with the defender trailing. As Hall advanced off this line Burke clipped a right-footed shot low to Hall's left but the striker and the home side's plentiful supporters were left gasping as the chance passed narrowly wide.

The second half saw more of the same and only a brilliant sliding interception two minutes into the half from Greig Henslee prevented Thurtell from having



Striker's keeper Brendan White punches desperately over Shaun Blackman head. PHOTO: ROBYN WOODALL

a free shot just six yards out from goal. Hall was back in the action again only a minute or so later to parry a twenty-yard drive from Chay Hews. Strikers' fans were again left groaning in disbelief as the ball then popped up waist-height to Thurtell, whose off-balance attempt to steer the rebound into the open net ended with the ball rolling just wide.

The Fire were now finding it tough to get forward at all, but left winger Ryan Delahunty briefly raised their hopes in the sixty-second minute when, he found himself faced by Hews as a ball played behind Carseldine gave Delahunty room to run. Hews forced Delahunty wide as the winger outpaced him, but Delahunty's deep cross had Seb Usai backpedalling

anxiously before he leapt up to tip the ball on to the roof of his net.

From there the game calmed a little, both sides struggling to carve out genuine opportunities as the ball seemed to get stuck in midfield.

Knowing that his side had to win to keep their title hopes alive, Brisbane coach David Large wasn't afraid to roll the dice, bringing on Dylan Goodman and Jordan Mason with only twelve minutes remaining and neither side looking like scoring.

Almost immediately, Goodman found himself inside the Fire's penalty area for his first touch, striding on to a short pass that cut the visitors' defence open. Hall was out like a flash as Goodman went for the first-time finish, the goalkeeper spreading his body, the ball deflecting off

his leg and onto the roof of the net.

But it was the other substitute, Mason, who was destined to have the biggest impact. As the Strikers pressured the Fire inside their defensive third Mason won a tussle for possession and then strode forward with the ball into left side of the Fire's penalty area. Using his strength to hold off a defender Mason dribbled towards the six-yard box and an advancing Hall. The Fire's keeper couldn't get a touch this time though as Mason rammed a low left-footed shot past into the net to spark wild celebrations amongst the Strikers players and supporters.

The goal was enough to secure the result that Brisbane so desperately needed as they attempt to halt Sunshine Coast's seemingly unstoppable march towards

LADDER										
	P	W	D	L	For	Ag	GD	Pts		
1	Sunshine Coast	18	15	1	2	52	23	29	46	
2	Brisbane Strikers	18	12	3	3	49	17	32	39	
3	FNQ Bulls	18	9	2	7	40	36	4	29	
4	NQ Razorbacks	18	8	4	6	30	21	9	28	
5	Capricorn Cougars	17	5	2	10	22	34	-12	17	
6	QAS	16	5	2	9	34	47	-13	17	
7	Whitsunday Miners	17	3	5	9	23	37	-14	14	
8	Bundaberg Spirit	18	2	3	13	23	58	-35	9	

RESULTS										
Brisbane Strikers 1 (Mason 84) v Sunshine Coast FC 0										
NQ Razorbacks 1 (Searle 55) v Whitsunday Miners 1 (Schaper 84)										
QAS 1 (Quinn 10) v FNQ Bulls (Ruiz 8,17, Alderton 39))										
Bundaberg Spirit (Stephen-son 70) v Capricorn Cougars (Evans 62, Smilie 77)										

NEXT ROUND										
ROUND 19										
FNQ Bulls v Capricorn Cougars										
Sat 31 Jul 8:00pm										
Sunshine Coast FC v Whitsunday Miners										
Sun 1 Aug 1:30pm										
Bundaberg Spirit v Brisbane Strikers										
Sun 1 Aug 3:00pm										
QAS v NQ Razorbacks										
Sun 1 Aug 2:00pm										

the QSL title. Despite the scenes of delirious pandemonium after the 1-0 win it's still likely that the Fire will indeed walk off with the Premiers trophy as the loss still only leaves them with the task of collecting three points from a possible nine.

Saturday's other game saw NQ Razorbacks in action at home against Troy Mundy's Whitsunday Miners. The home side looked odds on for the win thanks to an early second half strike from Joshua Searle but as happened last week against FNQ Bulls a late equaliser ensured that the Razorbacks had to share the points. Ben Schaper was the hero for the visitors, striking with only six minutes of normal time remaining to give his side a valuable point as the Miners look to finish as high as possible on the table.

Sunday's games saw no surprises as FNQ Bulls pulled off a resounding 3-1 win against QAS and Capricorn Cougars put a major dent in Bundaberg's hopes of avoiding the wooden spoon as they snatched a 2-1 win at Martens Oval thanks to a late winner from Matt Smilie.

In other news around the league Football Queensland have reportedly committed themselves to the QSL for at least the next three years. More interestingly there are plans for expansion with aims to introduce two extra clubs into the league in the near future. Gold Coast and Brisbane are the nominated regions for the new teams, a step that should be welcomed by the football community after the loss of Redlands, Olympic FC and Logan United after last season.



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GOAL DIFFERENCE SEPARATES OLD RIVALS

By Russ Gibbs

Only goal difference separates Champions Canberra FC and their old rivals Belconnen United at the top of the Gatorade Premier League after thirteen rounds following Canberra FC's escape against Monaro Panthers and Belconnen's convincing win over Tuggeranong United.

Canberra FC was indebted to a stoppage time equaliser from defender Matt Grbesa to get out of jail and force a 1-1 draw with the Panthers. After wasting a stack of chances in the first half the home team seemed to be heading for a first defeat of the season and facing the possibility of losing for the first time in their Deakin Stadium home since its refurbishment as Goran Veljanovski gave the visitors the lead with barely five minute remaining. However, Canberra FC pushed for one last effort and was rewarded when Grbesa latched onto a cross and headed home the equaliser.

On Saturday afternoon Belconnen United made light of terrible conditions at Kambah 2 to see off Tuggeranong United 5-1. Tai Smith bagged a brace whilst Danny Macor, David Kemp and Cameron Reinhart also netted after Mark Shields had given Tuggeranong an early lead. Whilst the score may look one-sided the game only really blew out in the last twenty minutes as the Blue Devils took advantage of a tiring United defence to score four times.

Woden Valley also hit five with a comprehensive 5-1 dismantling of ANU FC at ANU North Oval. The in-form Woden were two-nil ahead inside seven minutes after early goals to Lukas Cole and Carlos Salazar and held their cushion until the 67th minute when Tom Rogic reduced the gap to give the home team some hope. However that hope was extinguished minutes later when Daryll Hall bulleted a header into the net to restore the two-goal advantage. A minute later Salazar struck his second, and sixth of the season, before a superb effort from Bensah Afiabo, spotting James Kaye off his line from close to half-way, completed the win. It could have been even more for Woden as Hall saw his penalty well saved by Kaye.

Cooma Tigers stay third on the table after they thrashed Goulburn Strikers 5-0 at Nijong Oval. Adrian Labutte and Serdan Bircan both scored doubles adding to Marcial Munoz's opener as the Tigers earned a comprehensive victory. The result has put the Strikers hopes of a finals place in serious jeopardy whilst Cooma remains seven points behind the top two.

Elsewhere, Canberra City came from 0-2 down after 13 minutes to defeat Canberra Olympic 6-2 in a goal-fest at Hawker Football Centre. After Oliver Wiederkehr and Domenic Giampaolo had given Olympic their 2-0 lead City stormed back into the match and amazingly were 3-2 ahead by the 35 minute mark. Obi Shadmaan, Misko Naumoski and David Dexter were the scorers and in the second half Naumoski added his second through a top-drawer free kick before substitute Pat Ross-Magee added a late brace to complete the rout.

The Blue Devils were made to work extremely hard by opponents Weston Creek in a tough tussle at McKellar Park and had



ACT Premier League action from Woden Valley's (white) 5-1 win over ANUFC (stripes). PHOTO: PAUL LAU



to wait until the 54th minute to open the scoring in a match that seemed poised for a draw. Striker Maja Blasch struck her fourth goal of the campaign to break the deadlock and, with Weston pushing for a goal to level the scores again, Belconnen caught them with a classic sucker punch when Lauren Keir sealed the points with nine minutes remaining.

Belwest Foxes were in cruise control as they demolished Tuggeranong United 5-0 in their clash at Kaleen Enclosed. Livewire striker Cian Maciejewski found her goal touch once again grabbing another hat-trick to take her season's total to seventeen in the race for the Golden Boot. Katrina

Staniforth and Sam Price completed a comfortable win that maintains the Foxes nine point lead at the summit of the table.

A clinical set-piece, created by Catherine Brown and converted by Ashleigh Palombi, was the crucial moment in Woden Valley's 4-2 win over ANU WFC. Palombi's goal, her second of the day, put Woden ahead 3-2 and finally broke ANU WFC's resolve. Earlier in the day new Dutch import Aniek Schepens had given the students the lead and, after Woden had hit back to make it 2-1, Schepens scored again with a brilliant 25 metre drive to level the scores once more. However, Palombi's goal crushed a determined display from ANU with Hayley

Hinde and Erin Clout Woden's other scorers.

Bottom club Brindabella Blues put in their best performance of the season to date pushing under-strength Canberra FC all the way before succumbing to a goal from Ashlea Bryant. Bryant struck her third goal of the season to spare Canberra FC blushes as the stubborn Brindabella Blues fought all the way. The Blues defended superbly and were mightily unlucky not to gain a tangible reward from the game, what would have been their first point of the season. As it was the solitary goal from Bryant puts Canberra FC into the top four a point clear of Weston Creek in fifth.

NEXT ROUND	
Round 14	
Sat 31 Jul KO 6pm Belconnen Utd v Goulburn Strikers	McKellar Park
Sun 1 Aug KO 3pm Canberra FC v Cooma Tigers	Deakin Stadium (Deakin Oval)
Sun 1 Aug KO 3pm Monaro Panthers v ANU FC	Riverside Stadium
Sun 1 Aug KO 3pm Woden Valley v Canberra City	Woden Park Enclosed
Sun 1 Aug KO 5pm Canberra Olympic v Tuggeranong Utd	Hawker Football Centre

LADDER	
	P W D L F A GD Pts
1 Canberra FC	13 8 5 0 41 10 +31 29
2 Belconnen United	13 9 2 2 36 19 +17 29
3 Cooma Tigers	13 6 4 3 28 16 +12 22
4 Canberra City	13 7 1 5 24 19 +5 22
5 Monaro Panthers	13 6 2 5 19 23 -4 20
6 Canberra Olympic	13 4 4 5 16 22 -6 16
7 Woden Valley	13 5 0 8 20 30 -10 15
8 Goulburn Strikers	13 3 3 7 23 23 0 12
9 ANU FC	13 3 0 10 13 33 -20 9
10 Tuggeranong United	13 2 3 8 16 41 -25 9

WPL LADDER	
	P W D L F A GD Pts
1 Belwest Foxes	15 14 0 1 70 10 +60 42
2 Woden Valley	14 11 1 2 53 14 +39 33
3 Belconnen United	15 6 4 5 42 16 +26 22
4 Canberra FC	15 6 3 6 25 36 -11 22
5 Weston Creek	15 6 3 6 28 25 +3 21
6 Tuggeranong United	15 4 3 8 31 38 -6 15
7 ANU WFC	14 3 3 8 14 31 -17 12
8 Brindabella Blues	15 0 0 15 9 103 -94 0

ACT RESULTS	
Tuggeranong United 1 (Mark Shields) Belconnen United 5 (Tai Smith (2), Danny Macor, Cameron Reinhart, David Kemp)	
Canberra FC 1 (Matt Grbesa 90') Monaro Panthers 1 (Goran Veljanovski 85')	
ANU FC 1 (Tom Rogic 67') Woden Valley 5 (Lukas Cole 4', Carlos Salazar 7', 70', Daryll Hall 69', Bensah Afiabo 79')	
Cooma Tigers 5 (Marcial Munoz 6', Serdan Bircan 31', 71', Adrian Labutte 36', 65') Goulburn Strikers 0	
Canberra City 6 (Obi Shadmaan 19', Misko Naumoski 21', 68', David Dexter 35', Pat Ross-Magee 77' 90+1') Canberra Olympic 2 (Oliver Wiederkehr 6', Domenic Giampaolo 13')	
WPL	
Belconnen United 2 (Maja Blasch 54', Lauren Keir 81) Weston Creek 0	
Woden Valley 4 (Ashleigh Palombi (2), Hayley Hinde, Erin Clout) ANU WFC 2 (Aniek Schepens (2))	
Belwest Foxes 5 (Cian Maciejewski (3), Katrina Staniforth, Sam Price) Tuggeranong United 0	
Canberra FC 1 (Ashlea Bryant) Brindabella Blues 0	

BLUE DEVILS MOVE INTO THIRD SPOT

Second half goals from Maja Blasch and Lauren Keir has helped Belconnen United into third place on the ladder after the fifteenth round of action in The Tradies Women's Premier League.



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SKILLZ (6-12), TINY TOTS (3-5)

Monday 26th July 2010



Victorian Junior Results & Ladders

goalweekly.com



Girls	Central	-	North	East	-	East	15-16	A	P				
							W	D	L	F	A	P	
Boroondara Eagles							13	11	2	0	70	12	35
Croydon City Arrows							12	8	3	1	33	11	27
Ashburton							12	8	2	2	31	9	26
FC Bulleen Lions							13	6	4	3	32	12	22
Knox City							13	6	0	7	18	18	18
Whitehorse Utd							11	5	1	5	23	22	16
Mooroolbark							11	3	1	7	10	25	10
Doncaster Rovers							12	3	1	8	24	41	10
Kensington JGSC							12	2	2	8	19	46	8
Sherbrooke Rangers							13	0	2	11	7	71	2

Girls	Central	-	North	East	-	East	15-16	B			
					P	W	D	L	F	A	P
					13	12	0	1	71	8	36
					13	9	1	3	55	16	28
					13	8	1	4	26	15	25
					13	7	0	6	38	28	21
					13	6	2	5	32	24	20
					13	4	0	9	21	56	12
					13	2	1	10	9	36	7
					13	1	1	11	12	81	1

Girls	Central	-	North	East	-	East	15-16				C		
							P	W	D	L	F	A	P
	Glen Waverley						13	10	1	2	32	7	31
	Waverley Victory						13	8	1	4	39	25	25
	Oakleigh Cannons						13	7	1	5	20	17	22
	Brandon Park						13	7	0	6	34	26	21
	Watsonia Heights						13	5	3	5	34	24	18
	FC Bulleen Lions						13	5	2	6	25	18	17
	Greenvale Utd						12	3	2	7	14	33	11
	DOC Utd						12	1	0	11	16	64	3

Girls	Central	-	North	East	-	East	15-16	D
				P	W	D	L	F A PT
Yarra Jets				12	10	2	0	58 13 32
Eltham Redback FC				12	9	2	1	41 8 29
Eastern Lions				13	6	1	6	14 25 19
Boronia				13	3	3	7	22 33 12
South Yarra				12	2	1	9	12 43 7
Croydon City Arrows				12	1	3	8	16 41 6

Girls	South	East	-	South	13-14					A
				P	W	D	L	F	A	P T
Sandringham				11	11	0	0	62	0	33
Brighton				12	10	0	2	40	9	30
Berwick City				11	8	0	3	33	10	24
Carrum Utd				11	5	0	6	19	27	15
Peninsula				10	2	0	8	3	27	6
North Caulfield				12	1	1	10	4	40	4
Hampton				11	1	1	9	5	53	4

Girls	South	East	-	South	13-14 B					
				P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Sandringham 1				13	11	2	0	62	6	35
North Caulfield				13	11	2	0	54	8	35
Mornington				13	8	1	4	34	25	25
Sandringham 2				13	5	5	3	18	8	20
Carrum Utd				13	6	1	6	20	28	19
Brighton 1				13	4	3	6	23	18	15
Southern Stars				13	3	4	6	14	25	13
Casey Panthers				13	2	5	6	12	34	11
Brighton 2				13	2	3	8	21	30	9
Hampton				13	0	0	13	3	79	0

Girls	South	East	-	South	13-14 C					
				P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
White Star	Dandenong			12	12	0	0	75	2	36
East Bentleigh				13	12	0	1	59	8	36
Langwarrin				13	7	2	4	34	42	23
Berwick City				12	5	3	4	25	15	18
Oakleigh Cannons				13	4	6	3	24	18	15
Rosebud				12	4	4	4	18	16	16
Sandringham				13	3	6	4	22	12	15
Mornington				13	3	5	5	15	24	14
Seaford Utd				12	2	4	6	9	34	10
Endeavour Utd				12	2	3	7	6	27	9

Bergers hot on Inter's heels

By Niki Cook

Round 14 of the Victorian Women's Premier League again demonstrated the ability of the league to throw up surprises this year, with Preston going within a whisker of upsetting Ashburton before settling for a point. Elsewhere, South and Casey shared the points as well, with Heidelberg United triumphing over Bendigo Vipers.

A goal in each half was enough for Heidelberg United to secure the three points from a potentially tricky road trip to Bendigo. The win moves United to level on points with ladder leader Box Hill Inter, for the time being at least, and gives it the upper hand in the race to secure a top two finish and the double chance in the finals. Julia Nicolaci and Melanie Camilleri were the goalscorers for the visiting side. The defeat, Bendigo's seventh of the season, means that it is still not out of the woods where relegation is concerned, especially as its remaining three matches are all away games. Bendigo has slipped a place on the ladder to seventh, but still four points ahead of bottom side Altona City.

South Melbourne and Casey Comets bounced back from their respective defeats in Round 13, to play out a stalemate at McIvor Reserve on Sunday. In a game of few chances, a draw was a fitting result, as neither side was able to break the game open. The result leaves Casey fifth on sixteen points, with South one place and four points behind. Casey can, theoretically, still break into the top four, but it has a fairly tough run in, and would need to rely on Ashburton losing matches. South has climbed a place on the ladder as a result on the draw, overtaking Bendigo, but it, too, is still not safe from relegation.

Preston Lions picked up another valuable point, but it will rue the two that got away, as it surrendered a two goal advantage at Ashburton on Sunday afternoon. After a goalless first half the match exploded into life after the interval, with Preston establishing a two goal lead within the first ten minutes of the restart with Joanna Meletis and Sarah Sumner both on target for the visiting side. Having defeated South Melbourne last week, Preston looked on track for its second successive victory, but Ashburton had other ideas. It pulled a goal back with just over twenty minutes left on the clock, but could not find the further breakthrough it required to square the match. Deep into injury time Preston still held the advantage, but Ashburton capitalised on a goal-mouth scramble to squeeze the ball into the net with the last kick of the match, and claim a share of the points.



Laura Croft (Comets) makes a determined effort to stop Mel Aloisi (South Melbourne) from disposing of the ball. PHOTO: JOHN PUNSHON

While Preston will no doubt be disappointed to have let the game slip at such a late stage, the point it did gain gives it a valuable advantage over bottom side Altona City. With tough matches against the top two sides still to play, as well as the sides directly above and below it, that one point could yet save Preston from the drop. For Ashburton, it missed the chance to go third, but it will be relieved to have left the match with any points at all.

The final match of the round, between Box Hill Inter and Sandringham, took place on Monday evening, after the time of going to print.

With the top four virtually decided, in Round 15 the attention will be on the bottom of the ladder, and those at risk of relegation, as the bottom four sides face off against each other. The action begins on Saturday afternoon at BT Connor Reserve, when Preston Lions will be looking to extend its unbeaten run to three, as it hosts Bendigo Vipers, with both sides looking to get out of relegation danger. Altona City and South Melbourne clash at HC Kim Reserve on Sunday, in a real six-pointer of a game, which could also go a long way to determining which team will be relegated at the end of the season.

Also on Sunday, Heidelberg United and Casey Comets meet at Olympic Village, while Ashburton and Sandringham meet at Ashburton Park. Box Hill Inter has the bye.



Laura Spiranovic (lfft) of South Melbourne takes on Vanessa Helmar of Casey Comets. PHOTO: JOHN PUNSHON

WPL RESULTS

**Bendigo Vipers 0
Heidelberg Utd 2**
(M Camilleri JL Nicolaci)

**South Melbourne Womens
0 Casey Comets 0**

Ashburton 2
(E Curo C Pfeiffer)
Preston Lions 2
(J Meletis S Sumner)

Reserves:
BASL 0 Heidelberg Utd 4,
South Melbourne 1 Casey
Comets 3, Ashburton 10
Preston Lions 1

WPL NEXT ROUND

Preston Lions v Bendigo Vipers
BT Connor Reserve
Sat 31 Jul KO 1:00PM

Altona City v South Melbourne Womens
HC Kim Reserve
Sun 1 Aug KO 1:00PM

Heidelberg Utd v Casey Comets
Olympic Park (Village)
Sun 1 Aug KO 1:00PM

Ashburton v Sandringham
Ashburton Park
Sun 1 Aug KO 3:00PM

Bye v Box Hill Inter

WPL LADDER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Box Hill Inter	12	8	3	1	35	10	27
Heidelberg Utd	12	9	0	3	30	14	27
Sandringham	12	7	2	3	24	13	23
Ashburton	12	7	1	4	33	21	22
Casey Comets	12	5	1	6	19	22	16
South Melbourne	13	3	3	7	13	21	12
Bendigo Vipers	13	3	3	7	13	24	12
Preston Lions	12	2	3	7	12	31	9
Altona City	12	2	2	8	8	31	8

WPL RESERVES

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ashburton	12	9	2	1	47	9	29
Casey Comets	12	7	2	3	24	10	23
Heidelberg Utd	12	6	4	2	25	11	22
Sandringham	12	6	4	2	21	14	22
South Melbourne	13	6	3	4	23	15	21
Box Hill Inter	12	6	2	4	28	14	20
BASL	13	3	1	9	11	45	10
Altona City	12	1	2	9	12	31	5
Preston Lions	12	0	2	10	6	48	2

For more WPL news visit
Emma Field's blog [http://
fromthebackline.blogspot.
com](http://fromthebackline.blogspot.com)

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Warriors Return to Winning Ways

By Aritro Abedin

A certain sense of calm was restored to the State League Division One this weekend after last week’s manic round of upsets, with Langwarrin taking the three points against struggling Whittlesea to reclaim their place in the promotion zone. Pascoe Vale continued their superb recent form with a commanding win over Clifton Hill to take them into fifth place, while North Geelong brought some life back to their season with a win over Malvern City.

Langwarrin were back at home after last week’s stunning 4-0 loss to lowly Clifton Hill, a result that would have left Gus Mcleod’s charges asking serious questions of themselves. However, they made amends in impressive style this week, eking out a 1-0 result over the Zebras to climb back into 2nd place and showing the sort of resolve that sides need to win promotion at this level. Joe Harris was the scorer for Langwarrin.

Pascoe Vale have been irresistible in recent times, having compiled an unbeaten record since Round 9 while picking up 14 out of a possible 18 points in the process. They were superb again as they routed visiting Clifton Hill 3-0 at Hosken Reserve. Jason Principato, Zlate Matlioski and Adrian Talarico were the scorers for the home side, who now edge to within 2 points of 2nd placed Langwarrin.

Pascoe Vale coach George Kakaletsis was quick to acknowledge that his team enjoyed some luck when Clifton Hill’s goalkeeper was sent off for a last ditch challenge that handed Zlate Matlioski his penalty. ‘It was a pretty even first half, and Clifton Hill were a lot better than they were when we played them in Round 1.

But the penalty really changed the game which usually happens when a player gets sent off and we really increased our intensity and our pressure and started creating chances. They had three at the back and we went after them. It was really pleasing to see that we didn’t relax and we kept going at them.’ However, he was guarded about this team’s chances for promotion this season. ‘I said to the boys that we need to string some wins together and yes, the last six weeks have been really good for us, especially the last two weeks when we’ve had back to back wins over Fawkner and Clifton Hill. As for our promotion chances, well next week will be a real test for us when we play Langwarrin. We’re only two points away so it’s definitely up for grabs. But I’ve always said that we have the squad to get promoted, we just need to get some consistency into our play. But if we can get 6 points in the next two weeks then we’re definitely a chance.’

Meanwhile Fawkner Blues’ season continued to waver, succumbing to their second successive defeat against St.Albans in a 2-0 result at Churchill Reserve.

Martin Hana impressed for the home side with a double to his name after an excellent display in front of goal for the Saints. The win ensures the Saints have no chance of falling into the drop zone this season as they now streak 10 points clear of Clifton Hill and Malvern City.

Meanwhile the Blues are still only 1 point off second placed Langwarrin, but they desperately need to get their season back on track when they play top of the table Springvale White Eagles next Friday night.

North Geelong bounced back from successive losses against ladder leaders Springvale and Bulleen with a much needed away win against Malvern at Kingston Heath.

The 3-0 score-line did not do justice to a plucky Malvern side who had their share of bright moments and could very well have taken a point from the match had they been more clinical in front of goal. Conversely, Vinko Buljubasic’s Warriors



Langwarrin goal scorer Joe Harris controls the ball under pressure from Michael Mazzarella.
PHOTO: JOHN PUNSHON

made the best of their opportunities and went home with a win that puts them only four points behind second placed Langwarrin.

Former Melbourne Knights NSL premiership player Adrian Cervinski was man of the match, capturing a brace in a classy display in his favoured position at centre-forward.

It was he who opened the scoring in the 10th minute, receiving a delicate first-touch through ball from Robert Zadworny before going on to beat the keeper with a delightful lob that showcased all his high-level experience.

He then doubled the lead in the second half with a well struck 25 yard free kick to put his side in the box seat. The busy Robert Zadworny then rounded off a commendable individual display with a header in the last 10 to complete the contest for the Warriors. Vinko Buljubasic said that good finishing was the key to his side’s win. ‘It was a deserved win, even though they gave us a few scary moments in front of goal, they missed their chances and we did well to take all of ours.’

He also praised the efforts of Robert Zadworny, who has got his name on the scoresheet more times than any other Warriors player this season. ‘He’s a really tricky player, he’s quick and he makes it really hard for defenders to mark him because he’s got so much pace. He’s been pretty good for us this season.’

The Warriors went into this season probably expecting to be in the running for a promotion spot, but ultimately injuries have cruelled their prospects of playing in the VPL in 2011. Buljubasic reflected on a season that could have been much more productive had all his players been available to him. ‘I’m pretty happy with the way the season’s gone.

In the last five weeks we’ve actually had half our squad missing so it’s been hard for us. It’s also important to note that we’ve got four players out for the rest of the season so having all these players missing has definitely dented our chances for promotion this season.’

However, The Warriors have a chance to edge closer to second place when they play the out of form Whittlesea Zebras next Saturday.

The all important Bulleen vs Preston and Springvale White Eagles vs Western Suburbs matches were played after we went to print.



Referee Lewis Giuseffi tries to restore calm as Ben Caffrey (Langwarrin) lets Whittlesea keeper Robert Santilli know all about it following a clash between them. PHOTO: JOHN PUNSHON



Arthur Tsonis (left), supported by George Potter, tidies up for Whittlesea, denying Reha Ulusoy a scoring chance PHOTO: JOHN PUNSHON

SL1 RESULTS

Langwarrin 1 (J Harris)
Whittlesea Zebras 0

Pascoe Vale 3
(J Principato Z Matlioski A Talarico)
FC Clifton Hill 0

Malvern City 0
North Geelong Warriors 3
(A Cervinski 2 R Zadworny)

St Albans Saints 2
(M Hana 2)
Fawkner Blues 0

Under 21s:
Langwarrin 3 Whittlesea
Zebras 2, Pascoe Vale 2 FC
Clifton Hill 1, Malvern City 0
North Geelong Warriors 3,
St Albans Saints 4 Fawkner
Blues 2

SL1 NEXT ROUND

Round 16
Fawkner Blues v Springvale White Eagles
CB Smith Reserve
Sat 31 Jul KO 3:00PM

FC Clifton Hill v St Albans Saints
Kevin Bartlett Reserve
Sat 31 Jul KO 3:00PM

Langwarrin v Pascoe Vale
Lawton Park Reserve
Sat 31 Jul KO 3:00PM

Whittlesea Zebras v Nth Geelong Warriors
Epping Soccer Stadium
Sun 1 Aug KO 3:00PM

Preston Lions v Malvern City
BT Connor Reserve
Sun 1 Aug KO 3:00PM

Western Suburbs v FC Bulleen Lions
Ralph Reserve
Sun 1 Aug KO 3:00PM

SL1 LADDER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Springvale White Eagles	14	10	2	2	31	15	32
Langwarrin	15	8	2	5	27	27	26
FC Bulleen Lions	14	7	4	3	26	11	25
Fawkner Blues	15	7	4	4	23	17	25
Pascoe Vale	15	7	3	5	24	19	24
North Geelong Warriors	15	6	4	5	22	12	22
Western Suburbs	14	5	6	3	24	17	21
Whittlesea Zebras	15	6	3	6	19	20	21
St Albans Saints	15	5	8	2	30	22	20
FC Clifton Hill	15	3	1	11	19	30	10
Malvern City	15	3	1	11	9	38	10
Preston Lions	14	1	2	11	10	36	5

SL1 U21 LADDER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
North Geelong Warriors	15	10	3	2	34	13	33
FC Bulleen Lions	14	10	2	2	31	14	32
Langwarrin	15	10	2	3	31	18	32
Pascoe Vale	15	9	0	6	35	23	27
Whittlesea Zebras	14	6	4	4	25	19	22
Springvale White Eagles	14	6	3	5	25	23	21
St Albans Saints	15	7	1	7	26	24	19
Western Suburbs	12	6	1	5	22	25	19
Preston Lions	14	3	3	8	26	32	12
FC Clifton Hill	14	2	4	8	15	32	10
Malvern City	15	2	3	10	18	39	9
Fawkner Blues	15	1	2	12	8	34	5

The title race is on!

By Adam Hussein

Mickleham 7 vs. 4 Essendon

The game started at a frantic pace with both sides having half chances, Mickleham & Melbourne Knights star Anthony Colosimo scored a nice rebound that was quickly equalised by top goal scorer Alexander Stevanovic. Marko Nastik was energetic for Essendon in his second game and really slots in nicely to the side. Colosimo scored again for Mickleham only for Essendon to equalize again. Both teams went into half time locked at 2-2 with some intense match changing team talks. Mickleham came out and dominated with Ryan Filipovic scoring four amazing goals. Dejan Tosic scored a solitary goal for Essendon in the game. The exuberant youthful Mickleham ran over the top of the experienced 2009 champions and will be looking to beat table-toppers Fitzroy next week.

Albert Park 5 vs.7 Brimbank

The last time these two sides met Albert Park decimated a poor Brimbank with Rashidi & Fernandez red hot. They were without both this time and really struggled against a Brimbank with it all to do to avoid relegation. Filipovic of the Ignjat variety scored a hat-trick on a night where he managed the side in the absence of Zoran Matic. Brimbank went into half time 4-1 up and were in cruise control without a recognisable goal keeper, regular flanker Nuretin Kalkan doing a fantastic job in between the sticks. Vadim Maestro Mazursky was in clinical devastating form, instrumental in setting up swift counter attacks and finishing coolly with a four goal haul. Brimbank really felt his absence in previous weeks and it was great to have him back in the side. He lifted the morale of the Brimbank players and hopefully can help them elevate out of the relegation zone.

Ashburton 3 vs. 8 Pascoe Vale FC

Primetime clash of the night proved to be the anti climax of the night with Pascoe Vale whitewashing Ashburton with a charitable final score line. It could've been 10-0 before half time if it wasn't for Andrew Plithakis in the Ashburton goal. Ashburton were hampered by suspensions to star target Dimitri Viithoulkas and prominent defender Luciano Bessa. Paul 'Vic Mens State Coach' Vidic brought back Bill Nalpantidis after a long absence from V-league Futsal. He scored a double but looked a touch off the pace. Pascoe Vale had talisman Tomislav Grgic back in town and Pascoe Vale looked like the side that won the

double last season. Grigic was reunited with double winners Barbosa & Simsek and they pulled apart Ashburton with man of the match Andre Caro finishing off three good moves. 6-0 up at half time Pascoe Vale took their foot off the pedal, with this side they could easily go on to win the league and must be deemed title contenders and possible favourites after this showing.

Metropolitan 9 vs 6 Prahran

The Metropolitan express steamrolls on after beating giant killers FC Prahran. A classy opening goal by Dino Redzepovic, a delicate chip that left Shakhanov & FC Prahran sprawling highlighted the difference between the two sides with Metro keeping in touch with Fitzroy and Prahran sliding down the table after consecutive losses. Dino scored another two, Avdic scoring a double one an absolute corker, Ikanovic, Castro, Jeles and Alija all chipped in with solitary goals. Prahrans talisman Avram had a lovely hat trick and hit the underside of the bar but was without any noticeable assistance from his team mates in causing Metro any real headaches. Jason Stewart has improved for Prahran but they really need players like Armstrong & Mukhtar to step up if they are to climb up the ladder. Mogai was solid in the back but goalkeeper Shakhanov was left to do it all himself with Metro working the ball around the D to precision. Clinical finishing was the difference as Metro maintain 2nd spot and Prahran could fall to as far as 8th at the completion of the night's games.

Hume FC 3 vs. 5 Fitzroy FC

Fitzroy looked to consolidate top spot, but it wasn't going to be easy against a Hume side that gets better every week. Under the guidance of Amin Keddad Hume have recruited and found a style that suits them nicely and sees them sitting as high as fifth on the ladder in their v-league season debut. They had ex-Pascoe Vale, Vic Mens State team striker & outdoor goal scoring machine Simon Lamanda debut in an exciting return to action for him, and he scored a decent double. George Klonis was fantastic in goals for the gold and blue of Fitzroy, with Minopolous playing an unusual role at the back and scoring one of the goals of the night, a chip in off the post from an acute angle. Ex New Zealand international Mark Burton was his classy self with two goals and three assists in a man of the match performance. He oozes classes and set up Da Silva & Hammer really well to score crucial goals before the half time whistle. Keddad has his



Young guns: Simon Lamanda from Hume FC battles it out with Fitzroy's Leigh Minopoulos. Lamanda's transfer to Hume from Champions Pascoe Vale was at the eleventh hour.



Anthony Colosimo From Mickleham FC sizes up one of his two goals against the 2009 V-LEAGUE premiership Champions FC Essendon

work cut out rotating the large Hume squad and will hope they can get back to winning ways next week.

Nth Melbourne 14 vs 5 FC Carlton

The whipping boys got whipped again in the last game of the night as North Melbourne went to town on a poor FC Carlton. 15 goals to the good North had a few suspensions to deal with after last week's fracas and still took issue with some of the refereeing. Futsalroo Barrientos scored four, Alinejad & Cooper three, Rahsidi two and Polatti and Petrevski solitary goals. Carlton had the



Magnificent Magical Maxi Avram from FC Prahran and the Little Emperor Alija Redzepovic from Metropolitan tangle in a massive round 13 clash.

best squad they'd had all season with Jafar Alsari & Leonardo Correa outstanding. Evandro was his energetic self and Algorabi, Leutz and Issa contributed accordingly. North capitalized on swift counter attacks and clever build up play from the back sucking in a Carlton side that pressed high up the court. Barrientos pulled the strings for Milton Sakkos's side who was still disappointed to concede the odd goal. Mu played his last game for North as he heads overseas for a few weeks. North continue their hunt for the title as Carlton look doomed to immediate relegation.

V-League

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Fitzroy FC	13	11	1	1	79	53	26	34
2 Metropolitan FC	13	9	2	2	116	80	36	29
3 Nth Melbourne FC	13	9	1	3	76	50	26	28
4 Pascoe Vale FC	13	8	1	4	80	60	20	25
5 Hume FC	13	7	1	5	65	56	9	22
6 Mickleham FC	13	6	1	6	72	66	6	19
7 Ashburton FC	13	6	0	7	70	77	-7	18
8 FC Prahran	13	5	2	6	64	67	-3	17
9 FC Essendon	13	3	3	7	69	71	-2	12
10 Brimbank FC	13	3	3	7	66	69	-3	12
11 Albert Park FC	13	2	1	10	56	78	-22	7
12 FC Carlton	13	1	0	12	47	133	-86	3

Round 13 Results July 21

•6:30 FC Essendon v Mickleham FC 4 - 7
•7:15 Albert Park FC v Brimbank FC 5 - 7
•8:00 Ashburton FC v Pascoe Vale FC 3 - 9
•8:45 Metropolitan FC v FC Prahran 9 - 6
•9:30 Hume FC v Fitzroy FC 3 - 5
•10:15 Nth Melbourne FC v FC Carlton 14 - 5

Round 14 Clashes July 28

•6:30 Ashburton FC v FC Carlton
•7:15 Albert Park FC v Essendon FC
•8:00 Mickleham v Fitzroy FC
•8:45 Nth Melbourne FC v FC Prahran
•9:30 Pascoe Vale FC v Brimbank FC
•10:15 Hume FC v Metropolitan

Top Scorers

1.Alexander Stevanovic FCE 37 goals
2.Vadim Mazurskiy BFC 29 goals
3.Leigh Minopoulos FFC 28 goals
4.Alija Redzepovic MFC 26 goals
5.Ryan Filipovic MkFC 26 goals

SouvlakiHut State League Championship

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 FC Melbourne	11	7	0	4	52	38	14	21
2 FC Collingwood	9	6	0	3	63	36	27	18
3 Melbourne Uni FC	10	6	0	4	52	28	24	18
4 Elsternwick FC	10	6	0	4	48	51	-3	18
5 Doncaster FC	9	5	0	4	44	34	10	15
6 CF Brunswick	10	5	0	5	52	61	-9	15
7 FC Maribyrnong	10	5	0	5	37	52	-15	15
8 FC Geelong	11	4	0	7	53	44	9	12
9 FC Balwyn	10	1	0	9	32	89	-57	3

Round 12 Results July 18

•7:40 Elsternwick FC v FC Collingwood 7 - 5
•8:20 Melb Uni FC v FC Maribyrnong 1 - 3
•9:00 CF Brunswick v FC Geelong 6 - 10
•9:40 FC Balwyn v FC Melbourne 2 - 4
•Bye Doncaster FC v Bye

Round 13 Clashes July 25

•7:40 Doncaster FC v FC Geelong
•8:20 CF Brunswick v FC Melbourne
•9:00 Melb Uni FC v FC Balwyn FC
•TBA FC Maribyrnong v FC Collingwood
•Bye Elsternwick FC v Bye

PHOTOS BY
Franco Lucchetti, Nick Chippas

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Monday 26th July 2010

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RICHMOND EAGLES



1

OAKLEIGH CANNONS



0

Match Details:

Richmond: S.Gal, A.Viola, D.Tsiaras, M.Lujic (J.Krncevic 73'), D.Visevic (M.Catalano 86'), M.Ferrante, A.Kovacic, M.Bissinger, T.Milardovic, S.Topalovic, D. van 't Schip.

Goal: Visevic 75'

Yellow Cards: van 't Schip 45' Topalovic 57'

Red Cards: None

Oakleigh Cannons: A.Cagalj, J.Cumming, J.Fitzgerald (B.Obradovic 7'), S.Drakos, L.Palinic, Y.Yusuf, C.Watson, N.Kalmar, S.Webster, R.Diaco (J.Karpeh 71'), M.Curcija (B.Damianos 71').

Yellow Card: Webster 26' 70'

Red Card: Webster 70'

Man of the Match: Michael Ferrante (Richmond)

Venue: Kevin Bartlett Reserve

Crowd: 300

Eagles rock to the top

By Mark Boric

Round Nineteen of the Alanic Victorian Premier League began with a near top of the table clash as leaders Richmond hosted third-placed Oakleigh Cannons on Friday night.

Richmond, backing up quickly after a 1-0 win at Sunshine George Cross on Monday, made changes to their starting line-up with Steven Topalovic returning from injury and Milos Lujic brought in to face his former club from the opening whistle.

Oakleigh also made changes to the side which lost 1-3 to Hume City at home. Nick Kalmar returned from injury and was joined by Yusuf Yusuf, with Jerry Karpeh and the injured Ari Drakos making way.

A foul in the fourth minute by Topalovic gave Cameron Watson a shot at goal from a free kick about twenty-eight yards from goal, which he hit directly at Stjepan Gal. An overlapping Andrew Viola was then brought down on the left, and from the free kick on the touchline Michael Ferrante sent the ball to the near post where Antun Kovacic put it over the crossbar when it fell to his non-preferred right foot.

A sharp turn and shot from twenty-five yards by Michael Curcija also posed no problems for Gal. Richmond went close to opening the scoring in the sixth minute, after Ferrante switched the ball from right to left where Daniel Visevic sent it wider to Davey van 't Schip who fired a shot which struck the post before being cleared. Oakleigh were then forced into a substitution, with John Fitzgerald pulling up with an injury after chasing Lujic down the right wing a minute earlier and needing to be replaced by Bonel Obradovic.

Kalmar also tried to test Gal from long range, but he also struck s shot straight to the Richmond keeper. In the seventeenth minute a partially cleared corner was crossed back in to the far post where Jamie Cumming headed it centrally for Ricky Diaco, who had his shot blocked. Two minutes later Cucija

shot at Gal from fourteen yards after Diaco had pulled the ball back for him on the left, as Oakleigh enjoyed a good spell of possession. Scott Webster went into the referee's notebook in the twenty-sixth minute for a heavy sliding challenge on Dimitri Tsiaras, who had been played a "hospital ball".

Richmond came back into the game in late in the second half. A great ball from Topalovic released Lujic down the right, but his cross sailed over the goal. Visevic then played a ball out wide to left to Viola who's cross floated goalwards and was finally gathered by Adrian Cagalj after some juggling as he backpeddalled to the goal-line. Visevic went close to opening the scoring when chipping the ball over a defender before chipping just over the goal as Cagalj confronted him. A rash challenge on Webster by van 't Schip saw his name added to the book of referee Shaun Evans in the forty-fifth minute. When half-time came the 0-0 deadlock remained.

After a good move down the left three minutes after play resumed, Diaco got the ball to Watson who shot wide across the face of goal. Ferrante shot well over the goal from thirty-five yards after latching onto a backheel from van 't Schip. When van 't Schip was fouled by Cumming, Ferrante drove a free kick wide from an angle. A cross from Webster then saw Watson head the ball down for Diaco, who was foiled by Gal coming off his line smartly.

In the sixty-second minute Daico fired a shot wide after a good turn on the left corner of the penalty area. Richmond should have taken the lead four minutes later, when a chip into the six yard box by Visevic saw Topalovic flick the bouncing ball agonisingly wide of the post. With twenty minutes to go Oakleigh were reduced to ten men. A poor ball out of defence saw van 't Schip gain possession, and he turned Webster before being brought down by a flick to his trailing leg as he tried to race away, earning the Oakleigh midfielder a second yellow card. The free kick into the box was then well claimed and held by Cagalj.

Eagles keeper Stepjan Gal punches clear from Stelios Drakos. PHOTO:ANITA MILAS

In the seventy-fifth minute Richmond duly took the lead. A throw-in near the left corner flag saw Tsiaras lay the ball back to Viola who swung a cross in towards the far post where Visevic finished well with a brilliant volley. Three minutes later Tsiaras intercepted a pass and played in van 't Schip on the left, who sent in a cross which saw Ljuban Palinic crunched as he competed with Ferrante and Jesse Krnecvic. Palinic required lengthy treatment before being able to rejoin the action and see out the match.

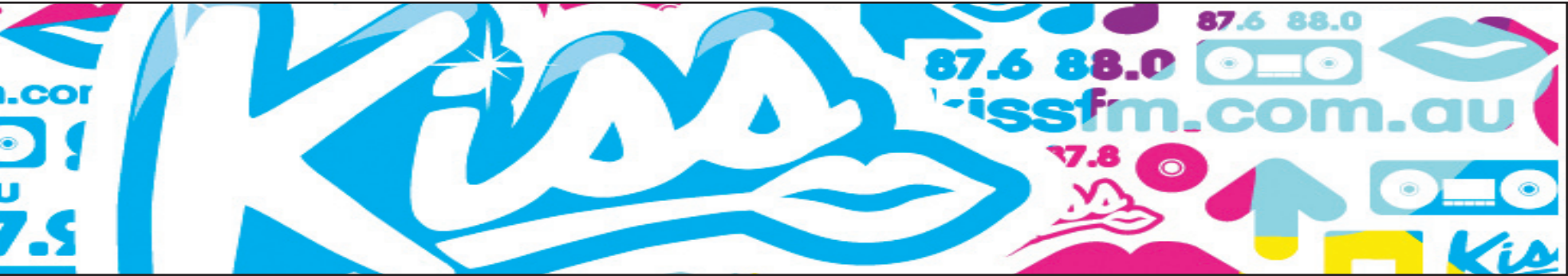
A great ball from Ferrante, switching play from right to left, released Visevic who sent in a cross which a lunging Krnecvic was only able to get a slight touch to as it bounced across the face of goal. In the eighty-fourth minute Viola looked to seal the match, cutting in from the left and beating two men in the process before shooting just over the bar from twenty yards. As ninety minutes expired a free kick out wide on the right from Ferrante saw Krnecvic put a difficult

header wide. The second minute of stoppage time saw van 't Schip get the ball out on the left and cut in before forcing the save of the match from Cagalj with a shot from twelve yards which was turned around the post for a corner. The final 1-0 scoreline maintained top spot on the table for the Eagles.

Richmond will look to keep their regained momentum going when they meet South Melbourne at John Cain Memorial Park on Sunday. The Cannons recent slide, winning only once in five games, could see their finals place in jeopardy. They are now fourth on the table, with the clubs just behind them, Dandenong Thunder, Northcote City, Heidelberg United and South Melbourne all still in the Top Five mix. They next travel to Knights Stadium to meet Sunshine George Cross on Sunday. The battle against the relegation-threatened Georgies which they will have to go into without Kalmar and Watson, who are departing for the A-League.

Milos Lujic heads clear under pressure. PHOTO: ANITA MILAS

The Eagles shake their tail feathers after Daniel Visevic scored the winner. PHOTO: ANITAS MILAS




87.6 88.0

87.6 88.0

87.8

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34

Monday 26th July 2010

SUNSHINE GEORGIES



1

GREEN GULLY



2

Match Details:

Sunshine Georgies:

M.John, S.Romein, F.Richards, C.Sweeney, D.Cameron, B.Cogger(A. Bourakis), E.Christodolou, B.Devlin, L.Grounds, L.Shin, J.Blackburn(A.Nabbout).

Green Gully:

N.Roganovic, S.Burton, M.Medjedovic, D.Jones, R.Ollerton, J.Fleming, G.Wales(M.Sanders), T.Gould, J.Munoz(G.Hockless), B.Fisher(J.Groenewald), A.Vargas.

Crowd: 400

Sunshine Georgies: 1

Goals: James Blackburn '20

Yellow Cards: N/A

Green Gully: 2

Goals: Brent Fisher '25, Timothy Gould '90

Yellow Cards: N/A

Man of the Match:

Timothy Gould (Green Gully)

Last Minute Gould Winner In Maltese “El Classico”

By Markian Jaworsky

Gully were on the receiving end of a last minute equaliser last week, but hit back with a last minute winner this week. In fact, in even better news Gully came from behind to win a game with first goals for the club from Brent Fisher and Timothy Gould. The win puts Gully into 3rd place, with 3 rounds to play.

The latest installment of the traditional derby started as a cage affair, until Sunshine’s James Blackburn broke the deadlock against the run of play. Blackburn capitalised on weak clearance from Mile Medjedovic, who appeared to come into a misunderstanding with his goalkeeper Nikola Roganovic. It was the second such misunderstanding in defense in as many weeks for the Cavaliers, however ironically Gully still boast the best defensive record in the VPL.

Gully sprung to life after the Georgies goal. Almost immediately Gary Wales popped up for a header which struck the Georgies upright with Sunshine’s goalkeeper Martin John well beaten. Within five minutes the visitors found parity, an Andy Vargas corner kick met the head of Kiwi Striker Brent Fisher, and the ball sailed into the Georgies net past Martin John.

Moments later Timothy Gould almost put Green Gully into the lead, but his header hit Sunshine’s crossbar and rebounded to safety.

In the second half, Gully applied the pressure but appeared as though they



Gully players swamp Timothy Gould after he scrambled the ball over the line in injury time to secure top honours in the derby with Sunshine George Cross. Photo: STEVE STAREK

would not break through. Substitute Graham Hockless, who came on in the first half for an injured Jonathon Munoz put the shot wide, Stevie Burton hit the upright in the last fifteen minutes, and substitute Matthew Sanders had what looked to be a legitimate penalty claim denied. Against the run of play, the Georgies continued to pose a counter threat through the run-

ning of captain Fidel Richards.

With just injuy time remaining on the clock, Matthew Sanders threw himself at the ball, and in the scramble which followed, Timothy Gould somehow with a foot, knee and chest combination just got the ball over the Sunshine goalline.

Speaking after the match, Timothy Gould responded when asked about

his performance “I have managed to get into the starting line-up through injuries and suspensions to the first eleven, and now I have to work on my fitness. Those last 15 minutes were really tough.”

In the Under 21’s, an impressive Green Gully won by four goals to nil against the Georgies.



The Georgies get the runs on the board early thanks to James Blackburn's opener. PHOTO: STEVE STAREK



Gully's Jonathon Munoz lets out a yelp after Georgies captain Fidell Richards puts in a heavy derby day challenge. PHOTO: STEVE STAREK

DANDENONG THUNDER

1

NORTHCOTE CITY

4

Match Details:

Dandenong Thunder:

Webster, S., Osman, L., Wilford, A., bright, J., Rexhepi, S. (Korcari, V.), Starosa, B., Davidson, R., Bulloch, S., Kellaway, G., Sherbon, L., Reed, J.

Scorer: Bulloch 39'

Northcote City:

Petropoulos, C., Chiappetta A., Jankovski, A., Curtis, N., McGough, M., Nixon, T., Kinigopoulos, H., D'Agostino, H., Savio, P., Kalifatidis, J., Voulgaris, J.

Scorers: Voulgaris, 22', McGough 25', Kalifatidis 37', 48'

Man of the match: Kalifatidis

Crowd : 500

LIGHT FAILURE HALTS CITY RAMPAGE

By George Stogiannou

In dire straits, trailing 1-4 just after half time on Saturday evening, Dandenong Thunder looked to be in need of divine Providence to deliver it from what looked like certain defeat against visiting Northcote City in their round 19 clash on Saturday evening.

And they may have just got it, when match referee Bruno D'Aniello abandoned the match after the floodlights failed and couldn't be re-activated.

Moments before, Northcote must have thought it was really Christmas in July when they found themselves 4-1 up against an in form Thunder outfit just after half time. The normally miserly Thunder defence which had conceded just three goals in its past seven matches conceded three goals in a 15 minute spell in the first half. City's Jonathan Voulgaris opened the scoring in the 22nd minute from the edge of the box, with a flying shot. Mark McGough added a second with a left foot free kick from 40 metres which somehow eluded a swarm of bodies. And speedy striker James Kalifatidis pounced on a loose ball, rounded

the keeper and scored from close range. He could have easily scored again soon after when he struck the post with goal at his mercy.

A thunderstruck Dandenong hit back in the 39th minute through midfielder Scott Bulloch's side foot shot from the edge of the box to give it hope of a comeback. Thunder coach, Stuart Munro introduced a second striker in place of holding midfielder Shane Rexhepi at the start of the second half, but it was the visitors who scored when Kalifatidis struck again following an assist from skipper Trent Nixon just after the break.

Although the home team had a mountain to climb, there looked to be more goals in an open game, played in very sloppy, wet conditions, when at the 50th minute mark, the lights failed.

Many of the visiting players, officials and fans immediately suspected foul play and amidst the confusion of accusations, claims and counterclaims, only one thing was clear. The lights weren't coming back on and there was to be no restart. It is now up to the FFV to determine if and under which circumstances the match will be re-played.



Mark McGough scores from his free-kick much to the delight of Trent Nixon (9) and Harry Kinigopoulos (11). PHOTO: PETER PSARROS



The Northcote bench is on its feet after Jonathon Voulgaris breaks the deadlock to open the scoring. The cheers would turn to jeers soon afterwards when the match was abandoned due to floodlight failure. PHOTO: PETER PSARROS

2

2

Squad Lists:

Match Stats
SHOTS: MK 9 AM 8
TARGET: MK 5 AM 3
CORNERS: MK 7 AM 4

Melbourne Knights Line Up:
Loncaric, Filipovic, Surey, Bran, Praiz, Townson, Zahra, Skara, Dubios (Ples 61'), A. Colosimo (Madgic 77') Tiatto.

Goals: Dubios 18', Filipovic 57'.

Yellow Cards: Dubios 41', Tiatto 73', Townson 75', Surey 90'.

Altona Magic Line Up:
Tomich, Mladenovic, Radojicic, Delev (Koltovski 46'), Siveski, Theodore, Cergovski, Ducevski, Thornley, Bozinovski, Talevski (Papa-dopolous 61').

Goals: Thornley 65', Cergovski 87'.

MoM: P.Cergovski (AM)

Crowd: Approx 1000 @ Knights Stadium

LAST GASP STRIKE BREAKS KNIGHTS HEARTS

By Andrew Fisher

Just two short years ago, the Altona Magic defeated the Melbourne Knights in the 2008 VPL grand final, today they played a match of almost equal importance, with the loser left with one foot firmly planted in the relegation zone.

The Knights started the match by applying some strong pressure to the Magic backline, and almost reaped the rewards in the first minute, as Dubios worked his way behind the visitors' backline, but was quickly twated by Tomich in the Magic goal.

In the 9th minute, Kevin Townson set up Adrian Zahra, whose shot flew just over the bar, as the Knights took control of the midfield.

Altona however almost took the lead in the 15th minute, as they broke clear after two consecutive Knights corners, Goran Talevski picked up possession just inside his attacking half, and with Danny Tiatto under his hammer, the former Knights player shot sailed just wide of the mark.

In the 18th minute, a quick free kick by Danny Tiatto on the halfway line caught the Altona defence off guard, giving the ever dangerous Jean Claude Dubios time and space to slot his shot past the advancing Tomich and giving the Knights the lead.

The Knights continued to enjoy the bulk of possession, and created the better scoring chances with Skara and Towson spurning goal scoring opportunities. The half time break was welcomed by Altona Magic, who looked to have little answers to the Knights pressure, and created little going forward.

Within minutes of the restart, Tommy Tomich was again forced into a good save, this time from a Dubios shot as the Knights continued with their dominance. Altona's best chance of the match came in the 53rd minute as Magic captain Pece Cergovski's long range volley flew just millimetres over the cross bar.

Another corner in the 57th minute lead to the Knights' doubling their lead, Ryan Filipovic rose highest to neatly head home following the Kevin Townson corner.

The two-nil score line was well deserved by the Knights, but as every Knights supporter would know they always find away to make it hard for themselves, and in the 65th minute Altona's John Thornley heading home



Alanic VPL action between the Knights and the Magic played on Sunday at Knights Stadium. PHOTO: DANIEL FLIS

from a Mathew Theodore cross to ensure the last twenty would be a nervous one for the home side.

Altona now had the ascendancy and pushed forward in search of a vital equaliser, but as the match passed the 80th minute mark it looked as though the Knights would hold on for the victory.

Magic captain Pece Cergov-

ski broke the hearts of the Knights in the 87th minute, with a spectacular volley from 25yards that sailed over Loncaric and into the back of the net.

It was another lost opportunity for the Knights who again let the points slip away, leaving themselves still sitting second last on the ladder, with just goal difference separating themselves and Altona Magic.

The Knights have one last opportunity to lift themselves from the relegation zone when they take on Bentleigh Greens at Kingston Heath on Friday night. The Magic will also be looking to take maximum points to secure their safety when they take on the red hot Hume City at Paisley Park on Saturday Night.



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The Knights celebrate after Jean Charles Dubois scores. PHOTO: DANIEL FLIS

SOUTH MELBOURNE

2

HUME CITY

2

Match Details:

South Melbourne

Peter Zois, Steven O'Dor, Daniel Vasilevski, Eddie Cetkin, Joe Keenan (Sebastian Petrovic 74'), Carl Recchia (Marcus Schroen 90'), Gianni De Nittis, Rama Tav-sancioglu, Fernando De Moraes, Marinos Gasparis (Jason Ricciuti 76'), James Stefanou
 (Scorers: Joe Keenan 30', Carl Recchia 85')

Hume City

Lou Acevski, Fabio Dilizia, Serdar Pir, Isiyen Erdogan, Alfonso Opa-zo (Turhan Sumbul (66'), Richard Cardozo, Zoran Petrevski, Tansel Baser, Dusko Delic (Ross Thomp-son 58'), Michael Bosevski, Phillip Riccobene (Brendan Beni 82')
 (Scorer: Richard Cardozo 42', 71')

Man of the Match: Richard Car-dozo (Hume City)

Venue: John Cain Memorial Park
 Date: Sunday 25 July 2010
 Crowd: 1,000

Late Recchia header saves South

By John Kyrrou

A late Carl Recchia header ensured that South Melbourne FC shared the spoils in the 2-2 draw with Hume City at John Cain Memorial Park on Sunday afternoon. Hume remain in second spot and South remains six points clear of the relegation zone, whilst at the same time creeping to within four points of a finals position.

Hume started the match strongly and forward Richard Cardozo had a few early chances to open the scoring. However it was the home side that scored first, when Joe Keenan got past his marker on the left side and from just inside the area fired a wonderful shot across Lou Acevski and into the far top corner of the goal.

The away side were level before halftime following a goal-mouth scramble. Despite Peter Zois making a point blank save during the scramble, the ball fell kindly for Cardozo to tap home. Hume could have even

had the lead going into the break but hit the post instead of the back of the net.

The second half began like the first half as Hume looked the more likely to score; however it was Zois who again thwarted the chances by the away side. Hume did eventually score with just under twenty minutes to go, when another scramble ended with Cardozo tucking the ball away for his second of the afternoon.

South pressed forward looking for an equaliser and was fortunate not to go further behind as Zoran Petrevski had two opportunities cleared off the goal line. The attacking initiative by South was ultimately rewarded five minutes from the end of the match when Recchia used his head to direct a Daniel Vasilevski shot into the goal at the back post.

South could have stolen the three points right at the death but former player and South legend Tansel Baser got his body in the way and blocked a stringing shot from Vasilevski



For South its all hands to the pumps as Richie Cardozo threatens the goal. Eddie Cetkin gets in the block as Peter Zois gets set to smother the shot and James Stefanou backs up. PHOTO: JOHN PUNSHON

that looked goal-bound. The final whistle signalled the end of a hard-fought game between both sides that probably both deserved a point for their efforts. Hume is on the road again next week when they travel to

Paisley Park to face the Altona Magic on Saturday night. On the Sunday afternoon, South faces another huge test against League leaders Richmond Eagles at John Cain Memorial Park.



Heads up! Richard Cardozo wins the header against Steve O'Dor. INSET: Scorer of South's first goal, Joe Keenan gives Phil Riccobene (left) and Dusko Delic the slip PHOTO: JOHN PUNSHON

<h1>HEIDELBERG UNITED</h1>		<h1>1</h1>
<h1>BENTLEIGH GREENS</h1>		<h1>0</h1>

In what looms as a critical match-up next round, Bentleigh Greens host Melbourne Knights at Kingston Heath next Friday night at 8:30pm. Heidelberg United travel the short distance to John Cain Reserve to take on Northcote City in a match that may give an indication as to which team will make the final five at season's end.



Alanic VPL action between the high flying Heidelberg United and Bentleigh Greens. PHOTO: DANIEL FLIS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Richmond Eagles	19	11	2	6	26	21	35
Hume City	19	10	5	4	34	26	32
Green Gully Cavaliers	19	9	3	7	29	20	30
Oakleigh Cannons	19	9	3	7	27	24	30
Heidelberg Utd	19	8	6	5	30	27	27
Dandenong Thunder	19	9	4	6	21	22	27
Northcote City	18	7	4	7	32	24	24
South Melbourne	19	8	5	6	34	26	23
Bentleigh Greens	18	5	3	10	17	32	18
Altona Magic	19	4	5	10	33	37	17
Melbourne Knights	19	5	5	9	24	30	17
Sunshine George Cross	19	4	3	12	17	35	15

<div> <div> <div>Richmond v N.T.C</div> <div>Kevin Bartlett Reserve</div> <div>Wed 28 Jul KO 8:30PM</div> </div> <div> <div>VPL Round 20</div> <div>  </div> </div> </div>	
Bentleigh Greens v Melbourne Knights Kingston Heath Soccer Complex Fri 30 Jul KO 8:30PM	Altona Magic v Hume City Paisley Park Soccer Complex Sat 31 Jul KO 7:00PM
Green Gully Cavaliers v Dandenong Thunder Green Gully Reserve Sat 31 Jul KO 3:00PM	South Melbourne v Richmond John Cain Memorial Park Sun 1 Aug KO 3:00PM
Northcote City v Heidelberg Utd John Cain Memorial Park Sat 31 Jul KO 3:00PM	Sunshine George Cross v Oakleigh Cannons Knights Stadium Sun 1 Aug KO 5:00PM

	P	W	D	L	F	A	G	D	Pt	
South Melbourne	20	17	2	1	65	26	53			Richmond 3
Richmond	19	12	2	5	44	25	38			Oakleigh Cannons 1
N.T.C	21	9	8	4	60	40	35			Sunshine George Cross 0
Green Gully Cavaliers	21	8	5	8	37	48	29			Green Gully Cavaliers 4
Oakleigh Cannons	19	7	7	5	40	34	28			Dandenong Thunder
Heidelberg Utd	20	9	3	8	31	29	27			Northcote City
Hume City	20	8	5	7	51	42	26			
Northcote City	19	6	6	7	46	43	24			
Bentleigh Greens	19	7	2	10	29	36	23			
Altona Magic	21	5	6	10	25	40	21			
Melbourne Knights	20	6	3	11	32	41	18			Melbourne Knights 2 Altona Magic 2
Sunshine George Cross	20	5	1	14	27	63	16			
Dandenong Thunder	17	2	4	11	21	41	10			South Melbourne 7 Hume City 1.

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